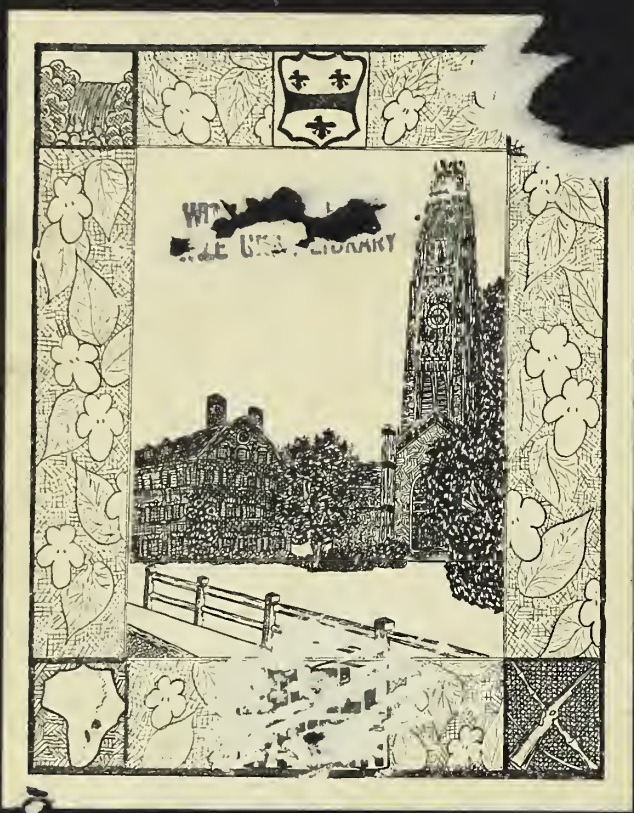


BRITISH NIGERIA

LIEUT.-COL.

A. F. MOCKLER-FERRYMAN





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A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION
OF THE BRITISH POSSESSIONS ADJACENT
TO THE NIGER RIVER, WEST AFRICA

BY

LIEUT.-COL. A. F. MOCKLER-FERRYMAN

F.R.G.S., F.Z.S., ^{Barrister} BARRISTER-AT-LAW

AUTHOR OF "UP THE NIGER," "IN THE NORTHMAN'S LAND," "BRITISH
WEST AFRICA," "ANNALS OF SANDHURST," ETC.

WITH MAP, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND APPENDIX

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED

LONDON, PARIS, NEW YORK & MELBOURNE. MCMII

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PREFACE.

THE very favourable reception met with by my work on British West Africa has induced me to revise and partly re-write such portions of it as dealt with the Niger regions, with a view to supplying reliable information about what is undoubtedly the most interesting section of our West African possessions. In the four years that have elapsed since the publication of my previous work, many important changes have taken place—changes which were, for the most part, foreseen, or at any rate predicted, but which, nevertheless, are so radical as to make entire chapters out of date. Within this short period the charter of the Royal Niger Company has been revoked, the Crown has assumed the administration of the whole country, the limits of the Niger Coast Protectorate have been considerably extended, new names have been given to the Protectorates, and new administrators appointed. Numerous small military expeditions have taken place and more important ones are in prospect; missionaries have pushed their way into new fields; science has discovered a reason for the

unhealthiness of the coast climate ; and civilising influences are gradually but steadily telling on the natives.

British Nigeria is a land of great promise—a country with a future before it ; and in the following pages I have endeavoured to lay before the reader a plain, unvarnished tale of the past, a statement as to the present condition of affairs, and a forecast of the future. If by the perusal of anything that I have written, the stay-at-home Englishman be induced to interest himself in this far-off country, or those destined to visit Nigeria get some knowledge of what is in store for them, then I shall be satisfied that the book has been worth putting together.

A. F. MOCKLER-FERRYMAN.

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BRITISH NIGERIA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Nigeria, Past and Present—A Land of Promise—Variety of Climate—The Explanation—An Epoch-making Date—Southern Nigeria—Northern Nigeria—The Niger in History—Sir Joseph Banks and the African Association—Mungo Park—His Experiences and Adventures.

WEST AFRICA is a proverbially unpopular part of the world; its climate long ago gained for it an evil reputation, which it has maintained even up to the present time. The travellers who would visit the West Coast of Africa merely for pleasure are few and far between; yet, now that the haunts of the malaria-producing mosquitoes have been discovered,* possibly the land may awake to new life—with British tourists taking the place of the mosquitoes. Some day this may come about, but not in the lives of the present generation, for the dog with the bad name, should he escape the hanging, can hardly expect to suddenly return to favour.

The countries watered by the great Niger river—the Nile of the Negroes†—are no better off in the matter of

* *Vide* Chapter XIX.

† The origin of the name is obscure; Ptolemy called it Nigeir or Nigir, from which writers in Latin transcribed it Niger, but it has no connection with the word *Niger*—i.e. *black*. The natives on the banks call it by various names (generally meaning “great river”) of which the following are the principal: Kwora (Kanuri), Fari n’rua (Hausa), Dsene (Timbuctoo), Oya (Yoruba), Furodi (Nupé), Edu (Bassa), Ehuloba (Igbira), Ujimini fufu (Igara), Osimini (Abo), Anyim (Ibo), Uzie (Sobo), Akassa-toro (Brass), and Bahr Sudan (Arabs).

a reputation than the rest of West Africa ; for, as a matter of fact, the deaths and sickness resulting from the early expeditions to the Niger did more to create in the minds of Englishmen a bad impression of West Africa than anything else. Yet, as these pages will show, the countries now known by the one term Nigeria are far from being all tarred with the same brush, containing as they do some thousands of square miles which possess a climate as healthy as any to be found in Tropical Africa. With the climate, however, we are not at present immediately concerned, and we have no desire to persuade the reader that the country which forms the subject of this book is unhealthy or otherwise ; rather would we induce him to believe that in these possessions of ours we have a vast tract of country which cannot fail to be of inestimable value to future generations of Englishmen.

British Nigeria as now defined comprises the countries situate on the coast between the British Colony of Lagos on the west and the German Cameroons on the east, with a *hinterland* extending approximately up to the 14th parallel of North Latitude. The exact limits, so far as they have been fixed, will be mentioned in a later chapter, when discussing events which have for many years been leading up to the necessity of a clear demarcation of boundaries between the "sphere of influence" of Great Britain and that of France on the one side and of Germany on the other. Until recently the country thus roughly described was known to us by various names, but the new title covers everything that was formerly designated the Niger Protectorate, the Territories of the Royal Niger Company, and the Niger Coast (originally Oil Rivers) Protectorate. The area of this new addition to the Empire is more than three times that of the British Isles, and within its 400,000 square miles, as can be imagined, are immense varieties of country, peoples, and climate.

In order to give the reader unacquainted with African topography a better understanding as to why the country and the climate should vary in a region the whole of which

lies within fifteen degrees of the Equator, we will say something about the peculiarities of the configuration of the great continent. Disregarding such matters as the shape, size, and situation of Africa, we pass to what is of greatest importance, viz. the relative heights or levels of the land. A glance at a physical map will show that all along the coast-line there is a belt of low-lying land, varying in width from a few miles to a hundred or more; then comes a belt of plateau at an elevation up to 2,000 feet above the sea, then further plateaux between 2,000 and 5,000 feet. Again we find a higher plateau, and finally, occasional mountain ranges and peaks attaining a height of 18,000 feet. Some years ago, before the interior had been thoroughly explored, Africa was likened to an inverted dish; this description, however, we now know to be hardly accurate, implying as it does that above the coast line (the rim of the dish) there was only one plateau of uniform level. Neither can we compare the country to a number of inverted dishes one above the other and diminishing in size, since the areas of the different plateaux vary enormously, and do not commence at an equal distance from the coast. The great point, however, to remember is that there is a succession of steps not in any way regular, but nevertheless, as a rule, well defined by high, scarped cliffs.

A second point worthy of notice is the lake system, though this is more remarkable in the east than in the west of the continent, the only large lake with which we are concerned at present being Lake Chad, a portion of which is situated within the north-east corner of Northern Nigeria. As to the rivers of Africa generally, it may perhaps be noted that, though not as numerous as one might expect from the area of the country, they are of immense size and length. They rise, in nearly all cases, at low elevations, and are fed almost entirely by surface drainage; the source of the Niger, for instance, is only 2,800 feet above the sea, yet for the greater part of the 2,600 miles of its course it is, at the full season, a magnificent waterway. Without these great natural highways for commercial and other

purposes, the interior of Africa would probably still be practically a *terra incognita*, though some people contend that, were it not for the facilities afforded by these rivers, roads and railways would long since have been laid down from the coast to the inland parts, with the result that the country would have developed much more rapidly. Be this as it may, it is absolutely certain that roads and railways will never supplant such great water highways as the Niger, though they will, when made, be of inestimable value for opening up those parts of the country lying at a distance from the rivers.

West Africa differs in no particular degree from the rest of Tropical Africa, and Nigerian topography is typical of West Africa. Here we find the low-lying belt of coastline, the succession of plateaux, the higher mountains, the wide and long waterways, and a scarcity of harbours. Commencing with what is termed the Niger Delta we have a land of swamps and impenetrable forests, intersected by a vast network of streams and creeks, and inhabited by numerous pagan tribes, addicted to every species of vile custom, including even cannibalism and human sacrifice. This was the region visited by the earlier Niger expeditions from the south, and here neither missionary labours nor trade have, so far, done much towards the civilisation of the native. The principal tribes of the Delta districts are the Idzo (or Ejo) nearest the sea; the Ibo, further inland; and the Igara, extending almost as far north as the Niger-Benué confluence; to their sub-divisions, as well as to their customs and peculiarities, we shall refer later. Above this pagan land, *i.e.* at the confluence, there is a marked change, not only in the type of the people, but also in the nature of the country. Mohammedan influence commences to show itself; and the low swampy wastes are superseded by rocky hills and far-extending grassy plains, well-studded with magnificent trees.

Such, in brief, is a description of the country which, on the 1st January, 1900, came under the direct administration of Great Britain, with the titles of Southern and

Northern Nigeria. The former consists of those districts of the Delta and the neighbourhood previously known as the Niger Coast Protectorate, with the addition of the southern portion of the Territories of the Royal Niger Company; while the latter comprises the remainder of the countries with which the Company had made treaties. Though only placed under British protection as recently as 1884, Southern Nigeria has been in continuous intercourse with Europe for several centuries.* As many of the place-names testify, the Portuguese was for a long while the chief power—at any rate as far as trade was concerned; ships of all nations frequented the rivers when the over-sea slave-trade was in full force; and later, when palm-oil took the place of the traffic in human beings, the British trader remained in almost undisputed possession—whether for good or for evil we will not pretend to say. Northern Nigeria, on the other hand, is comparatively a new land, known to Europeans, except by vague report, for little more than a hundred years, and containing even now many parts still unvisited by white men.

Of the ancient history of the Niger countries there is scarcely anything interesting to write, and, though they have doubtless been peopled by negroes for countless ages, what changes the land has seen must remain for ever unknown; for here there are no time-worn ruins with hieroglyphics and inscriptions, no history tablets or other memorials to be yielded up by the earth. This region shows no signs of having been more than the habitat of beings, superior to the wild beasts amongst which they dwelt merely in the fact that they lived in huts of mud and grass, and that they were able to communicate with one another by word of mouth. No traces remain of any stages of development until within comparatively recent times, and the oldest literature on the subject takes us back no further than a few centuries.

* "An Account of the Kingdom of Benin : Abstract of a Voyage to New Kalabar, Bandi, and Doni Rivers, in 1699," by J. Barbot and J. Grazilhier. Astley's Collection, Vol. III., 1745. Also, "Barbot's Travels," etc., in Churchill's Collection, Vol. V.

The Greeks knew of the countries south of the Great Desert only from native travellers, though Ptolemy pretends to a certain amount of knowledge, mentioning in particular two large rivers as traversing the Sudan, viz. the Gir (Congo) and the Nigir. The Romans, it is certain, sent expeditions across the Sahara as far south as the Upper Niger, though they have handed down little information on the subject. It remained for two Arab geographers (Ibn Batuta, 1353, and Leo Africanus, 1556)* to furnish us with the earliest accounts of the Niger and its people, yet even they have nothing of great importance to relate, and the history of the Niger may be said to commence with the close of the eighteenth century, prior to which time no European traveller had seen the river at any point of its course. Then its mysteries suddenly called forth all the energies of Englishmen; the slave traders had brought back information collected from natives of the interior, who described the countries of the Upper Niger as a veritable Eldorado; Timbuctoo was represented to be a city of palaces, and there were towns innumerable whose houses were roofed with solid gold.

The Gambia became the favourite starting point for adventurers bent on penetrating into the golden interior; failure, however, attended all their efforts, and it was not until 1788 that the exploration of Central Africa was

* Leo Africanus was a very remarkable person. He was a Moor, born in Granada (Spain), then a Mohammedan city, and, when a child, moved with his parents to Fez, where he was educated. His somewhat superior education enabled him to obtain various good appointments, and he accompanied his uncle to Timbuctoo, on an embassy from Fez. He travelled also through Northern Africa, Persia, and Egypt, but was eventually captured by a Venetian and presented, as a slave, to Pope Leo X., who converted him to Christianity, gave him his liberty, and encouraged him to translate his African journals into Italian. He took the Christian name of John, and, the Pope being his godfather, the surname of Leo, with the fanciful addition of Africanus. John Pory translated (1600) his work into English under the title of "*Geographical Historie of Africa*, by John Leo Africanus, a More born in Granada and brought up in Barbarie."

taken seriously in hand. In that year a number of influential Englishmen, headed by Sir Joseph Banks (President of the Royal Society), formed themselves into the African Association,* with the determination to leave no stone unturned in the attempt to discover a route to the countries adjacent to the great Niger River.

It must be remembered that, at this time, absolutely nothing reliable was known about the river's source, course, or mouth. It appeared in most of the old maps of Africa, in some cases as a distinct river rising in a small lake and terminating in another lake, but usually connected with the Nile, either as an affluent or as a main branch flowing westward into the Gambia. Jeremy Collier's description of it (1688) is perhaps as interesting as anyone's; he says: "This is the greatest river of Africa, called by the natives Hind-Nijar. It ariseth in Æthiopia, from a lake of the same name, and, running westwards, divides Nigritia into two parts. After a long course, and the reception of divers rivers, whose names are unknown to us, it falls into the Atlantick Ocean, by six great streams, which are all south of Cape Verde but one."

Everything connected with the Niger was in reality pure conjecture, and the members of the African Association had views of their own. They decided that the Gambia had not proved itself to be a good starting point for the interior, and that some other route must be found. Accordingly, after consulting the vague maps then existing, the Association despatched a certain John Ledyard to Egypt, with instructions to strike south-west, across the desert, and try to discover the Niger; but Ledyard never got beyond Cairo, having contracted a fever of which he died on the eve of his departure. The Association next selected a Mr. Lucas to carry on the work of Ledyard, but the point of departure was changed to Tripoli, and thence a start was made in February, 1789. Fate was again, however, against the expedition, which, after a journey of five days, was forced to return, owing to its

* Afterwards granted a charter, and, later, incorporated with the Royal Geographical Society.

inability to make friends with the Arab tribes through whose country it wished to pass.

Defeated in the north, the African Association directed its attentions to the west coast, and, in 1791, Major Houghton, starting from the Gambia, passed eastwards to Medina, the capital of Wuli, and to Bambuk by the route which was afterwards followed by Mungo Park. How much further he travelled was never known, for reports came back that he had fallen a victim to the treacherous Tuaregs of the Sahara. Three years later, Watt and Winterbottom journeyed inland from Sierra Leone for a distance of sixteen days' march, only to be eventually forced by the natives to return to the coast.

So determined were the members of the African Association to discover some route to the mysterious countries of the Niger, that, in spite of previous failures, they still continued to seek out men of an adventurous turn of mind to carry on their plans. In 1795 their choice fell on the young Scotchman, Mungo Park, who at the age of twenty-four volunteered to follow up the work which had been entrusted to Major Houghton and others, and which had so unfortunately been cut short. That the selection was a wise one was proved by the results.

In May, 1795, Mungo Park was on his way to the Gambia River in the African trading ship *Endeavour*, and in due course he reached the little trading station of Pisania, where he was welcomed by the agent, Dr. Laidley, who, during a stay of some months, made him acquainted with much that was of value to him in his future travels. The instructions that Park had received from the African Association were briefly as follows: To find a way to the Niger, to endeavour to trace its course from source to mouth, and to gather as much information as possible about Timbuctoo and other large towns.

Accompanied by only two native servants, and carrying scanty provisions and a few small articles for purchasing food, Park, as can be imagined, set himself no light task when he commenced his journey eastward from Gambia. Although at first he was kindly received by

the pagan Mandingos, it was no long time before he fell foul of the Mohammedans, by whom he was plundered of almost everything he possessed. From this time his life was miserable beyond description, and he suffered hardships of every imaginable kind. Insulted, imprisoned, starved, robbed, and stripped naked; escaping only to be recaptured; parted from his faithful servants; the sport of negro crowds—such was Mungo's lot for seven long, weary months. Yet, all this while, he was moving forwards towards the goal of his ambitions—a sight of the great Niger River—and the hardships which he endured seem to have had the sole effect of spurring him on. Never had any African traveller lived through such experiences as those of Park before he reached Segou, the capital of Bambarra, where on the banks of the Niger he sat down (21st July, 1796), the first European to gaze on the great waters.*

The traveller's heart was light: he had accomplished the principal task allotted to him, and his vicissitudes were almost forgotten; moreover, he had hopes that the almost civilised condition in which the people of Segou lived would bring him a measure of hospitality. He was, however, doomed to disappointment, for his presence was so distasteful that the king sent him 5,000 cowries,† and asked him to leave the country, which, two days later, he did, deciding to explore the course of the river that had now such a strange fascination for him. For months he wandered by the Niger, hoping against hope to reach Timbuctoo, and, finally, after enduring everything short of actual murder, he retraced his steps and travelled south to Bamaku, whence he moved westward to Kamalia. At this place he fell in with a slave caravan marching to the Gambia, and, after an absence of two eventful years, he once more grasped the hands of the friends who had seen him depart, and who had long since given him up for lost.

* Joliba, one of the many names by which the Niger is known to the natives; other names have been given on page 1.

† Now worth about half-a-crown.

Returning to England at the end of 1797, Park became the hero of the hour, and after devoting some considerable time to the publication of his journals, he married and settled down in Scotland. His poor circumstances, however, made him somewhat discontented, and, though devoted to his wife, the spirit of adventure was still strong in him. He forgot the miseries which had accompanied his travels in Africa, and he longed to be once more exploring the course of the Niger. A few years later the opportunity came, and Park was placed in command of a Government expedition,* the object of which was to determine the course of the great river, and to endeavour to establish friendly relations with the various tribes on its banks. He started under very different circumstances to those of his first visit to the Gambia; he received a captain's commission, and was accompanied by his brother-in-law (Dr. Alexander Anderson) as lieutenant, and by Mr. George Scott as draughtsman. The expedition was to consist of forty-five European soldiers, and as many natives and transport animals as the leader might consider necessary when leaving for the interior; moreover, he was given a free hand as to his return route, and was permitted to draw on the Government up to £5,000.

In March, 1805, Park, Anderson, Scott, and four English mechanics reached Goree Island, then a British possession. From the garrison were selected Lieutenant Martyn, thirty-five privates, and two seamen, and the whole party then proceeded to the Gambia, whence the caravan started for the Niger by the route followed by Park on his return journey of 1797. The leader of the expedition soon discovered that his progress would be, if anything, slower and more troublesome than when he had made the journey alone. The number of Europeans and the size of the caravan was a signal to the natives to

* The African Association was still at work. Amongst others, Hornemann and Nicholls were despatched to the Niger. Hornemann succeeded in reaching Nupé from the north, but he, as well as Nicholls, died in Africa:

practise every species of extortion and robbery ; and the soldiers, uninspired with the object of the expedition, soon became disheartened by the hardships which they were called on to endure, sickened and died. Frequent attacks were made on the caravan, whose members were soon too weak even to defend their property. Their arms and beasts of burden were stolen from them, and their path was marked by the graves of their companions, who had fallen by the hands of the natives or had died from sickness. Wild beasts, also, were a continual terror to the party, and more than one life was ended by lions or leopards.

Despite all these terrible experiences, Park's heart never sank, and he continued to carry the remnant of his expedition forward, eventually, in August, 1805, reaching the river at Bamuku—though with only six of his Europeans still alive. Scott had disappeared, Anderson was at the point of death, Martyn was an encumbrance to the party, and there remained only the one man to do the work of twenty. He, however, had energy and endurance to face worse evils than had as yet confronted him, and he had once more set eyes on the mighty rolling Joliba—the lodestone which had drawn him from his northern home, his wife and children. He now set to work to build a boat, out of old canoes, in which he might embark his party, and attempt to trace the river to its mouth. By the middle of November all was ready for the voyage, but not before Anderson and two more men had been laid in the grave. Park's last letters home were dated from Sansandig, just before embarking ; they were written to his wife and to Lord Camden, the Colonial Secretary, and contained words full of hope. These—the last communication ever received from the discoverer of the Niger—were entrusted, together with the journals of the expedition, to Isaaco, Park's faithful guide, by whom they were conveyed to the coast and transmitted in safety to England.

Nine men left Sansandig on the 19th November, 1805, in the frail craft—Mungo Park, Martyn, three European

soldiers, one of whom was raving mad and the others prostrate, a guide named Amadi, and three slaves as paddlers. The boat was provisioned for several weeks, and Park intended to land nowhere and to have no intercourse with the natives on his voyage to the coast. It must be remembered that at the time there were a hundred conjectures as to where the Niger terminated; some imagined that it ended in inland swamps and lakes, others that it flowed eastwards and joined the Nile, while Park himself was convinced that it eventually entered the Congo. Before him, therefore, there was a journey of two or three thousand miles, but so confident was he of success that, in his last letter to his wife, he expressed the opinion that, by the following January, he would have reached the coast.

Down the river the boat slowly passed, at first without mishap; then came a series of attacks by natives in canoes, all of which, however, were successfully driven off by Park's muskets. Past Timbuctoo and into the Hausa country the adventurous little party paddled on, hopeful now that they had navigated a thousand miles of the river that they would reach their destination in safety. The mad soldier had, in the meanwhile, died, and Amadi's agreement having terminated, he left the boat, thus leaving Park to his own resources, should he come in contact with the natives on the bank. To Amadi the world is indebted for the last news of Park; shortly after he had severed his connection with the expedition the navigation of the river became difficult, the cataract of Boussa having been reached. Here a series of rocks stood up in the channel to bar the way, the current took the boat onward, the high banks and islands were crowded with armed natives, who, seeing the predicament that the strangers were in, hurled their weapons in showers upon them. The boat struck on a rock, and, powerless to move it, the four Englishmen jumped into the river and perished.

Little further information was ever forthcoming as to the fate of Park—a man who knew no fear, whose energy and endurance, though oftentimes tried to the utmost,

never flagged, and who will ever be remembered as the greatest of African explorers. To his old guide, Isaaco, was entrusted, in 1810, the mission of discovering full details of his master's ill-fated end, but he was able to add few, if any, particulars to what was already known.*

The curtain had fallen on the first act in the great drama of the discovery of the Niger, and his fellow-townsmen, more mindful than others, set up in Selkirk a suitable monument to their hero—Mungo Park.

* In 1823 Major Denham met, in Kuka, the son of a Fulah chief who had come from Timbuctoo. This man stated that he had frequently heard Park's expedition talked of, and he denied that the natives who pursued the boat in canoes had any evil intentions; their object was mere curiosity to see the white men, and the canoes that followed Park from Timbuctoo contained messengers from the King, who desired to warn the strangers of the dangers of navigating the river lower down. Duncan, in "*Travels in West Africa*" (Vol. II., page 181), gives the version of an eye-witness, who said that Amadi was the cause of the disaster, he having told the King of Yauri that Park had not paid his wages. The King stopped the canoes and Park resisted. He was mortally wounded, but was brought alive into the King's presence, where he died. In 1827, Park's son, Thomas, still believing his father to be alive, started on his journey into the interior, from Akra, to endeavour to find him, but never to be heard of again.

CHAPTER II.

EXPLORATION.

The Explorations of Captain Tuckey and Major Peddie—The Expedition of 1820-21 — The Sultan of Bornu and his Visitors—Major Denham and the Arabs—Clapperton's Journey to Sokoto—Clapperton's New Enterprise in 1825—His Death—Major Laing—Richard and John Lander—The Outlet of the Niger.

PARK'S theory, that the Niger was an affluent of the Congo, still carried weight in England, as is evident from the fact that, in 1816, the Government equipped a dual expedition. One party, under Captain Tuckey, was to proceed to the Congo, while the other, under Major Peddie, was to follow in Park's tracks and join hands with Captain Tuckey in the centre of Africa. The enterprise was a failure, for although Tuckey navigated the Congo and acquired much valuable information, he died there, and Peddie and his companions succumbed to the climate before making much progress. In 1818, Major Gray and Dr. Dochart endeavoured to follow up the route of Major Peddie's party, but only to meet with the fate of their predecessors.

The next attempt to continue the work of Park was undertaken in 1820, when the Government decided to send an expedition across the Sahara, from Tripoli, by the caravan route to Lake Chad. For this new enterprise were chosen Dr. Oudney, Lieutenant Clapperton, R.N., and Major Denham, and we now enter on the second phase of the exploration of the region which had, so far, swallowed up all travellers who had endeavoured to probe its secrets. The western route—that taken by Park—had been abandoned for several reasons, the hostility of the natives being the principal; while it was thought that the friendly relations that existed

between Great Britain and the Pasha of Tripoli might be utilised to ensure the safety of the expedition traversing the country to the south of his dominions with which he had intercourse. Accordingly, in 1821, Clapperton's expedition* started for Murzuk, whence, after a whole year of delay and annoyance, they set out for the Sea of Sudan. The Pasha, after considerable pressure, gave them a letter of introduction to the Sultan of Bornu, and they were accompanied by an escort of two hundred Arab horsemen with their chiefs. The party consisted, besides the three Englishmen already mentioned, of an English carpenter named Hillman and some servants—all natives of Africa except Jacob, a Gibraltar Jew, and Adolphus Sympkins (*alias* Columbus), who hailed from the island of St. Vincent. The provisions and numerous presents were conveyed on camels, and the *kafila* journeyed south through Bilma, reaching Bornu without accident, and with no great difficulty in less than three weeks.

They were well received by the Sultan of Bornu at Kuka, the capital, and remained there, enjoying the greatest kindness and hospitality, for nearly a year, though Denham was the only one of the Europeans who was able to visit the neighbourhood of the town. Clapperton and Oudney were, throughout the sojourn in Kuka, too ill to leave their huts, and Hillman suffered from continuous fever and delirium, though between the attacks he worked hard at making boxes, chairs, and other things for the Sultan. His greatest feat, however, was the construction of carriages for two old brass four-pounder guns, which the Sultan had received from Tripoli. They were successfully mounted, a mule-harness was designed by Denham, who also taught the natives to make canister shot, and trained them in working the guns. Denham and the Sultan (who was a most enlightened native) became great friends, and the latter was not slow in

* "Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 1823, and 1824," by Major Denham, F.R.S., Captain Clapperton, and the late Dr. Oudney: London. 1828:

utilising the talents of the former for the fortification of his town.

The original intention of the expedition had been to spend but a short time in Bornu, and then to proceed into the Hausa country (to the west) until they hit off the Niger at a point somewhere near the spot where Park lost his life. The Sultan of Bornu was, however, loth to let them leave his capital, averring as his excuse that the letter which they had brought from the Pasha of Tripoli made no mention of their intention to go beyond Bornu. The loss of their camels and horses by disease, and the inability to procure ready money to buy other beasts of burden was a further cause of inaction. To a man of Denham's energy and restlessness this enforced idleness was extremely distasteful, and though, by the Sultan's permission, he visited Lake Chad and the neighbourhood, and spent his time in shooting and hunting, he desired greater excitement—a desire which he was shortly able to fulfil. The Arab escort which had accompanied the party from Murzuk remained idle at Kuka, and after the novelty of the new scenes had worn off they began to find the time hanging heavily on their hands. Accustomed to lead a roving life, and only visiting the towns when a fortunate razzia had provided them with the means of enjoying themselves, these children of the desert chafed under their present circumstances, and soon broke out into mutiny. As a means of curbing these unruly spirits, their head chief proposed that they should accompany the Bornu troops on an expedition against Mandara, and the prospects of plunder and taking slaves soon induced them to join in the enterprise. Denham, who was still in good health and anxious to explore the country, saw in the raid an opportunity not to be lost, and since he had received instructions before leaving England to endeavour to follow any military expeditions of the natives, he determined to accompany the Arabs.

Oudney and Clapperton, who were still too ill to get about, disapproved of Denham's intentions, considering that it would prejudice the natives of the neighbouring

districts when it became known that an Englishman, whose king disapproved of slavery, had taken part in an expedition the sole object of which was the capture of slaves. Denham was not, however, to be dissuaded, and, although the Sultan at first put obstacles in his way, he succeeded in overtaking the force before it had gone very far. He was received by the Arab contingent with wild shouts of joy—the whole camp turning out to greet him—but, by the Sultan's orders, he was placed under the protection of the Bornu commander, Barca Gana, who treated him with all honour. The troops numbered some 3,000 men, of whom only the small body of Arabs were armed with fire-arms, and, after several days of arduous marching, the towns of the Fulahs, or Fellatahs, were reached, when the fighting commenced. Everything was left to the Arabs, in whose weapons the Bornu commander placed the greatest confidence, and Bu Khaloom, the chief of the Arabs, led the attack in person. The first two towns were carried without difficulty, and quickly burnt. The third offered more resistance, but the defenders were soon driven out, only, however, to rally, and, with a fierce onslaught, completely rout the Arabs and Bornus. Poisoned arrows and spears rained through the air; Barca Gana had three horses killed under him; Bu Khaloom and his steed were mortally wounded, and Denham was wounded in the face and lost his horse. The whole army fled in confusion, the Fellatah horsemen pursuing, and killing all whom they overtook. Denham, endeavouring to escape on foot, was quickly caught; his last hour, he thought, had come, but the clothes which he wore were too much for his enemies, who refrained from damaging them with their weapons. He was seized and stripped, and though wounded in two or three places during the operation, he contrived, while his captors were disputing over the possession of his garments, to give them the slip.

Shortly after this he fell in with Barca Gana and Bu Khaloom, who, with half-a-dozen Arabs, were resisting the charges of a party of Fellatahs, in rear of the retreating army. He was quickly placed behind one of the

horsemen, covered with a bournouse, and conveyed away at a gallop. The rout was complete, Bu Khaloom dropped dead from his poisoned wound, and any unfortunate man whose horse gave in was immediately slaughtered by the pursuing enemy. Few of the Arabs escaped, and those who succeeded in reaching Kuka were all more or less severely wounded. Never had an expedition been more signally defeated, yet Denham, who, besides losing everything he possessed, had several wounds, and was suffering from the terrible hardships of his flight, writes: "Such events, however, must sometimes be the consequence of exploring countries like these. The places I had visited were full of interest, and could never have been seen except by means of a military expedition, without still greater risk."

Ten months after their arrival in Kuka, Clapperton and Oudney left for Kano and the Hausa States, while Denham remained behind in order to take part in another expedition. During the six or seven months which had elapsed since his unfortunate visit to the Mandara country he had not been idle; he had accompanied an expedition, led by the Sultan in person, to the Munga country, and he had made many short excursions in the neighbourhood of the capital, and had collected an immense amount of information about the country and its people. His actions in taking part in these slave-raiding expeditions have been severely criticised, but his particular mission was of a military nature, his instructions being, as we have said, to make full inquiries into the fighting capacities and armaments of the various tribes of Central Africa. The Bornu people were at that time a warlike nation, and Denham consequently considered it advisable to see more of their prowess in arms, and thus, perhaps not too willingly, separated for a time from his companions. Fortune for once smiled on him, for barely a week of his solitude had passed, when a *kafila* arrived from Tripoli, and with it stores and provisions for the mission, under the charge of Ensign Toole, of the 80th Regiment. This unexpected delivery gave Denham new life. "I had now,"



MOHAMMEDAN "TOBE" OR
SHIRT MADE IN KANO.

Below. Cap worn with same.



FULAH HORSE EQUIPMENT.

Headpiece for Chief's horse, two
Spurs, Bit and Bridle.

he writes, "money, health, and a desirable companion," and he was ready for any wild adventure. The two Englishmen soon started on an excursion to the south of Lake Chad, where, after exploring the Shari River and the Loggun country, Toole, to the great grief of his companion, died of fever. The loss to Denham was irreparable; he had become greatly attached to young Toole, who had scarcely completed his twenty-second year, and whom he described on his arrival as full of energy, cheerfulness, and good fellowship. With his own hands he laid him in his grave at Angala—never before and probably never since visited by a European—then, feeling too sick at heart and in body to pursue his explorations, he returned to Kuka, where bad news awaited him, Dr. Oudney having died, on the 12th of January, at a place called Murmur, near Katagum.

Denham was confined to his hut with fever and with an affection of the eyes for ten days, but he was soon at work again, and taking part in a war with the Baghirmis, who had threatened Bornu. On this excursion he witnessed, at any rate, one good battle, in which the Bornus, led by their Sultan, utterly routed 5,000 Baghirmi warriors, the guns which Hillman had mounted doing great execution. Then came a second pleasant surprise; another Englishman, Mr. Tyrwhitt, arrived at Kuka with fresh stores, having been sent out by Government to relieve the expedition, and take presents to the Sultan. Denham and Tyrwhitt now proceeded to explore the eastern side of Lake Chad, and witnessed some more fighting, in which the Bornus came off second best.

It was now the end of July, 1824, and on returning once again to the capital, Clapperton and Hillman were found to have returned from their long journey to Sokoto. The former was in a miserable state of health, and the latter had suffered considerably from the climate and fatigue. Still, they had accomplished the great object of the expedition, and had traversed the country from Lake Chad to the Middle Niger and back again, thus adding to the explorations of Park a knowledge of the

countries extending over ten degrees of longitude to the eastward.

Clapperton's journey was a very remarkable one, especially when it is considered that neither himself, Oudney, nor Hillman were, on leaving Kuka, in a fit state of health for even a less arduous undertaking, and it is astonishing that two of the three should have returned alive. They started with a caravan of Arab merchants, on the 14th December, 1823, and travelled almost due west to Katagum, near which place Oudney unfortunately succumbed to consumption, which he had contracted at Murzuk eighteen months before. Clapperton, having buried his friend, though suffering much from frequent attacks of ague, pushed on to Kano, and thence proceeded to Sokoto, where he was received by the great Sultan Bello with every kindness and attention. Of Bello we shall have much to write, suffice it now to say that he was a man of vast ability and enlightenment who treated the English traveller with the greatest courtesy.* After remaining some time in Sokoto, Clapperton returned by his former route to Kuka, where once more the members of the mission were united.

Two months later Denham and Clapperton took leave of the Sultan of Bornu, and commenced the march to Tripoli, Denham visiting Lake Chad and Kanem *en route*. Mr. Tyrwhitt remained at Kuka as British Consul, but unfortunately succumbed to the climate within a very short time—in October, 1824. At Tripoli the three survivors of this expedition (Clapperton, Denham, and Hillman) arrived at the end of January, 1825, whence they immediately sailed for England. Thus ended the most successful expedition that had up till this time been despatched to West Central Africa—or what we now call Northern Nigeria. The amount of information collected about these hitherto unknown regions was immense; the countries from Murzuk to Bornu, around Lake Chad, and from Bornu westward to Sokoto, had been visited

* Sultan Bello proposed to Clapperton that an English consul and a physician should be appointed to reside at Sokoto.

for the first time by Europeans—by Englishmen authorised and paid by the British Government.

After the failures of the previous twenty years, the return of Denham and Clapperton from so long a sojourn in Central Africa was most encouraging, and the British Government, still eager to open up trade with the interior of Africa, decided to immediately send out another expedition. Sultan Bello, in the letter brought home by Clapperton, had expressed a desire to throw his country open to British trade, and to abandon the traffic in slaves, proposing also that English consuls should reside at places called Funda and Raka. He, moreover, had agreed that, on a certain date, he would send an escort to the coast town of Whydah, in the Bight of Benin, to conduct the Englishmen to Sokoto. The command of this expedition was given to Clapperton, who had been promoted Commander, R.N., and in August, 1825, his health being quite restored, he started once more on his travels. He was allowed to take as a companion a Dr. Dickson; and two naval officers, Captain Pearce and Dr. Morrison, were sent with him, with particular instructions to explore and survey the country in all directions from Sokoto. The presents from the Government to Sultan Bello and the Sultan of Bornu were of considerable value, and the mission was in every way thoroughly well equipped. Besides Columbus (Major Denham's old servant), Clapperton took, as his personal attendant, a man who was destined to play a great part in the exploration of the country—his humble and devoted servant, Richard Lander, on whom, subsequently, devolved the honour and glory of discovering the mouth of the Niger.

Towards the end of November, 1825, the little party of Englishmen reached the Bight of Benin, fully expecting to find Bello's escort waiting to receive them. To their great disappointment, however, on making enquiries, nothing could be heard of the escort, and even the name of the great Sultan of the Fellatahs was scarcely known. This *dénouement* was quite undreamt of, but Clapperton at once formed his plans, deciding to strike

across country to Sokoto, in the hope of meeting the escort on the way. Dickson, having expressed a wish to undertake the exploration of Dahomey and join Clapperton at Sokoto, was dropped at Whydah, whence, accompanied by Columbus, he reached Dahomey in safety. From Dahomey he proceeded to Shar (seventeen days' march from Dahomey), and then commenced his journey to Yauri; how far he got was never known, for nothing more was heard of him or his servant. The rest of the party, meanwhile, sailed to the Benin river, where they met an English merchant of the name of Houtson, who advised them to start for the interior from the port of Badagry. The vessel accordingly put back, and on the 29th November, Clapperton and his companions set out through Yoruba to Sokoto, Mr. Houtson acting as guide as far as Oyo (or Katunga), the capital of the Yoruba country.

No sooner had the march from the coast commenced than fever attacked every member of the party in succession, and before a month had elapsed, Captain Pearce and Dr. Morrison succumbed, both dying on the same day, the former at Engwa, and the latter at Jannah. Disheartened by the sudden loss of his two friends, Clapperton himself became ill, and Houtson and Lander followed suit, though the journey was continued, and Katunga eventually reached on the 23rd January, 1826. Here they were forced to remain until the 7th March, when the king allowed them to proceed to Boussa, where, on the 1st April, Clapperton inspected the scene of Mungo Park's disaster. Crossing the Niger, they now travelled without mishap through Yauri (or Yellua), Nupé, and Zaria to Kano, which was entered on the 20th July, barely two years from Clapperton's former visit, in which time he had completed a circular journey by land and sea of close on twelve thousand miles. The place had undergone a change; Kano was in low spirits, since Sultan Bello was at war with his neighbour the Sultan of Bornu, and the trade of the Western Sudan was paralysed.

After spending some time in Kano, a move was made towards Sokoto, in order to deliver Bello's presents in person, and on the 15th October the great Sultan was interviewed in his war-camp, near Coonia, the capital of Gober. Coonia, which was quite a small walled town, was about to be attacked by Bello's army, and on the following day Clapperton had an opportunity of witnessing the operations, his description of which is of considerable interest.

Sixty thousand Fulahs, mounted and on foot, encircled the town, and endeavoured to carry it by assault, but without success, and in the end the assailants were completely routed and dispersed by the handful of pagan defenders. This is sufficient to show what the fighting qualities of the great Fulah army were when its organisation was at its best, and, if Clapperton can be considered an impartial witness, it seems little to the credit of the pagan aborigines that they ever permitted themselves to be conquered. It must, however, be remembered that the Fulahs always owed their superiority to their cavalry, which could be of little use in the attack on a walled town. In this instance, Sultan Bello was worsted, for the Zurmi forces deserted in the night, and the Fulah army fled towards Sokoto, which, after three days' hard marching, was eventually reached in safety, on the 20th October, 1826. Here Clapperton took up his residence, being joined a few weeks later by his servant, Richard Lander, who had been left ill at Kano. From this time Clapperton's health commenced to fail, and his wish to proceed to Bornu being thwarted by Sultan Bello, he remained inactive at Sokoto and Magaria, until he eventually died on the 13th April, 1827, with some appearance of having been poisoned.

Lander buried his master at the village of Jungavie, and had a hut built over the grave, after which, but not without considerable difficulty, he obtained permission from Bello to start for the coast. Leaving Sokoto in May, he marched by a somewhat circuitous route to Badagry, which he reached on the 21st November, after many

perilous adventures; and a year after Clapperton's death he was in England.

The death of Clapperton and his companions checked for a while the ardour for discovering the course of the Niger. So far the ill-omened river had killed off almost every Englishman who had gazed on its waters, and where it terminated remained still a mystery. The information that had been obtained from the natives was unreliable, some asserting that the river flowed from Boussa eastward and emptied itself into Lake Chad, some that it continued its course for several hundred miles and eventually entered the Nile, while others maintained that it was identical with the Congo. As a matter of fact, the actual mouths of the Niger had been the resort of the European slave-traders for many years, though that these were the outlets of Park's river was unknown and undreamt of. It seems strange, when looking at the map nowadays, that there should have been any doubt in the matter, but a visit to the Niger Delta soon accounts for everything. The mass of water does not, as with most great rivers, flow in one channel larger than the others to the sea; but, at a distance of sixty miles or so from its termination, divides its waters to form several streams of almost equal size. There was nothing, therefore, to point to the fact that an extraordinarily large river emptied itself into the Atlantic in this neighbourhood. Geographers were sorely puzzled, and the Niger for a time shared with the North Pole the honours of being the problem of the age.

While these events were in progress, Major Laing, who had already travelled considerably in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, started from Tripoli for the purpose of exploring the Upper Niger regions, and more particularly of visiting Timbuctoo. His plans were boldly conceived, and as boldly carried out, for, like Park, he went off, with a native guide and a few native servants, into a country which he knew to be infested by marauding Tauregs. Journeying south-west, he passed through Ghadames and the oases of Tuat, and then plunged into

the desert. He had not travelled a fortnight, however, before he was set on by a band of robbers, looted of all he possessed, and finally abandoned, with no less than twenty-four wounds. Yet his courage did not fail him, and not only did he recover, but he actually succeeded in reaching Timbuctoo (18th August, 1826), where he remained for a month. Thus here, again, an Englishman had forestalled all other European travellers,* and though Laing's unfortunate murder while crossing the desert on his homeward journey deprived the world of the valuable information which he would have been able to give, the pluck and endurance of the man remained to arouse his fellow-countrymen's energies in the field of African exploration.

Disheartened at the ill-success that had frustrated their efforts to open up these regions, the British Government thought no more of African expeditions until Lander, who had fed his enthusiasm by publishing the story of his journey with Clapperton,† persuaded the authorities to commission him to return to Boussa, and take up the thread where Park had dropped it. It may, perhaps, be interesting to say a word about Richard Lander, for that a man in his position should have become a worthy successor to such intrepid explorers as Park and Clapperton is indeed remarkable. He was born in 1804, his father being a Cornish shop-keeper, blessed with a family of six children and a small income. At the age of eleven Richard started life as page-boy to a merchant in the West Indies, after which he served various masters in South Africa and England, having by the time he took service with Clapperton travelled through most of the countries of Europe, and seen a good deal of the world. In this manner he picked up the only learning he possessed, though that it was sufficient for the

* See footnote, page 46.

† "Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo," by the late Commander Clapperton, of the Royal Navy. To which is added "The Journal of Richard Lander," etc., London, 1829.

purpose is proved by the good work that he accomplished. Had he been an ordinary man of his class, he would have delivered over his master's papers, received his wages, and foresworn Africa for ever. Richard Lander, however, was of sterner stuff; he, like Park and Clapperton, had received a Niger baptism; his mission was to endeavour to solve the problem of the great river, and at the end of 1829 he had come to terms with the Government, who were not very enthusiastic in the matter. They would not expend any large sum on the new enterprise; in fact, the parsimony of the Government seems almost incredible. The expedition was limited to Lander and his brother, and the terms agreed upon were that Richard Lander's wife should receive an allowance of £100 during the first year of her husband's absence, and that on his return he should be paid £100 for his services. John Lander gave his services free, the Government refusing him any remuneration.

The two brothers, Richard and John, soon completed their arrangements, set sail from England, and arrived at Badagry on the 22nd March, 1830. Thence they journeyed inland, through what is now the Lagos *hinterland*, following practically the same route as that taken by Clapperton and by Richard Lander himself on his return with Clapperton's papers two years before, finally striking the Niger at Boussa, without mishap, in July. Fortune favoured them still further, for the king of Yauri, having consulted the oracle, gave them two canoes and a score of slaves as paddlers, with which, on the 30th September, they commenced their down-stream voyage. All went well, as day after day the dug-outs slowly drifted along in a south-easterly direction; occasionally other canoes were seen, but no one molested the travellers, who, as each morning broke, hoped to see the river widening to the ocean. At length, on the night of the 25th October, they found themselves descending more rapidly; a great river (the Benué) was flowing in from the east, and their course was changed to almost due south.

There was no longer any question as to the course

of the "Dark Waters," and a month later the explorers were on board an English vessel at Brass, having set at rest for ever the mystery that had for so long troubled the world.* It was at last known for certain that the Niger entered the Atlantic by several streams, the mouths of some of which had been visited by European traders for three or four hundred years. Richard Lander himself, before commencing his travels, was of opinion that he would probably reach the Benin river, which on the maps of the day was shown as having been traced (on no apparent authority) to within about a hundred miles of Boussa. Failing the Benin, the Volta was the alternative, the Congo theory having been abandoned long before, and Lander never for a moment imagined that he would come out as far east as he did.

One man only had guessed the true outlet of the Niger, though hundreds had studied the subject earnestly; one other man had been very near the mark, but the remainder had been hundreds of miles wide of it. He who had guessed aright was James McQueen; the other was Herr Reichard, who in 1808 had given his views to the world in the "*Ephemerides Géographiques*." Reichard laid down the course of the Niger from Boussa to the sea with fair accuracy, except that he made its outlet extend over too great a width, viz. from the Benin river on the west to the Rio del Rey on the east. It is perhaps hardly fair to describe McQueen's hypothesis as the result of guess-work, for he had peculiar facilities for arriving at the truth, and of these he availed himself. When residing in the West Indies (Grenada) he read the story of Mungo Park's travels, and as many of the slaves on the island hailed from West Africa, he soon discovered some who were acquainted with the neighbourhood of Park's great river. Every African who had ever seen or heard of the river was cross-examined, and day by day McQueen added to his store of information, until, after some years,

* Richard Lander received, in 1832, the first Royal Medal presented by the Royal Geographical Society "for the discovery of the course of the River Niger or Quorra."

he had succeeded in putting his puzzle together—at any rate to his own satisfaction. In 1816 he published his opinions in a small pamphlet, but, since he had never set foot in Africa, he was looked on as a mere theorist. He still worked on and gathered further details from newly arrived slaves, producing in 1821 a book,* wherein he set forth his arguments at considerable length. He not only described the course of the Niger, but he traced that of its mighty affluent, the Benué, with marvellous correctness. His views were given with as much certainty as if he had himself explored the entire river system of this part of Africa, and he summed up the matter of the outlet of the Niger in the following words: “In the Bights of Benin and Biafra, therefore, is the great outlet of the Niger, bearing along in its majestic stream all the waters of Central Africa from 10° west longitude to 28° east longitude, and from the Tropic of Cancer to the shores of Benin.”

At the time little attention was paid to McQueen's words, though he had the satisfaction of seeing them come true, and probably no one heard with greater delight of Lander's successful arrival at the sea than the scorned theorist.

* “Geographical and Commercial View of Northern Central Africa, containing a Particular Account of the Course and Termination of the Great Niger River in the Atlantic Ocean.” Maps, 8vo. Edinburgh, 1821.

CHAPTER III.

SLOW PROGRESS.

The Expedition of 1832—Macgregor Laird—Richard Lander's Death—An Ill-fated Enterprise—The Great Expedition of 1841—The Voyages of the *Albert* and the *Wilberforce*—A Melancholy Tale—The Niger Gets a Bad Name.

WE now enter on a new phase of Niger history. The explorers had performed their part, in so far that they had found out that the river was of immense size and that its banks were densely populated. It remained therefore for traders and philanthropists to open up the country, and the expeditions of the next few years endeavoured to establish friendly relations with the people, in the hope of inducing them to permit free intercourse with Europeans.

The Landers, in describing their adventurous journey,* so impressed their countrymen with the immense resources of the new land, that, within a year of their return, the first of the trading expeditions had set sail from England. The Government refused to have any connection with the new scheme, which was a speculation on the part of a Liverpool merchant, and although as regards trade it cannot be said to have proved otherwise than a dismal failure, its originator—Macgregor Laird—lived to see that failure often leads to success. Had hardship not undermined his constitution, his old age might have been cheered by the knowledge that his foresight laid the foundation of England's most prosperous possession in West Africa.† The expedition of

* "A Voyage Down the Dark River," by Richard and John Lander, 1832.

† Macgregor Laird was born at Greenock in 1808, educated at Edinburgh, and early in life became a partner with his father in an engineering business at Liverpool. This he gave up for African

1832* is famous in Niger history, not so much by reason of its being the first of its kind, as because, although it was equipped in the most lavish style, it established for the Delta a reputation for unhealthiness which it has never been able to shake off. The two vessels destined for this eventful undertaking were appropriately named the *Quorra*† and the *Alburkah*,‡ and, with forty-eight Europeans on board, they reached the mouth of the Niger in August, 1832. Macgregor Laird himself was with the expedition; Richard Lander also gave his services, while among the principal officers may be mentioned Lieutenant William Allen R.N., and Dr. Oldfield. The two vessels set to work to explore the various creeks of the Delta, in doing which several weeks were spent, resulting in the decimation of the crews by malaria. At length the main river was ascended, though, owing to the low state of the water, much inconvenience was experienced from frequent grounding on sand-banks, and, with the exception of exploring the Benué river for a short distance, little was done this year.

The expedition returned to the sea, and, after reuniting at Fernando Po, re-ascended the Niger, when they succeeded in reaching Rabba on the Middle Niger, and Panda, or Funda, on the Benué, but so far they had done nothing in the way of trade. Again Fernando Po was visited, and Laird returned to England; and in 1834, for a third time, the great river was ascended by Oldfield and Lander, but without any further result. The officers and crews of the *Quorra* and *Alburkah* had

exploration and trade, details of which will be found in a later chapter. Although known chiefly for his great work in connection with the Niger, he busied himself with Atlantic steam navigation, and the company which he formed in 1837 was the pioneer of the lines to America.

* "Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa by the River Niger in the Steam-vessels *Quorra* and *Alburkah*," by Macgregor Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield, London, 1837.

† The Niger above Lokoja.

‡ "Blessing" (*Hausa*). This was the first iron vessel that performed a sea-voyage.



NATIVES OF ASABA: OUTSIDE A
PAGAN VILLAGE, LOWER NIGER.

Photo. Mr. G. F. Packer.

gradually succumbed to the effects of the climate, and the captains' determination had at last given way, but only because it was no longer possible to navigate the vessels. Of the forty-eight Europeans who had left Liverpool two years before only nine were alive; of the officers Laird, Oldfield, and Allen alone survived; Richard Lander, who had borne all the trials of the expedition with great fortitude, met his death at the hands of the natives, being mortally wounded in the third ascent of the river, and dying at Fernando Po on the 2nd February, 1834.* Thus, on this African island, fate decreed should be buried Clapperton's two fellow-travellers; for Denham, who had given up African exploration after returning from Clapperton's first expedition, had been appointed Governor or Superintendent of Fernando Po, where he died in 1830, at the moment when Lander was solving the mystery of the Niger's mouth.

The results of this expedition as far as trade was concerned were most unsatisfactory; in its principal object it had therefore failed, and failed signally. But it had been a success in other ways; the Delta and the main river had been explored, and Lieutenant Allen had made a chart of the waters; moreover much had been learned (unfortunately from bitter experience) of the climate of the lower reaches of the Niger, thus paving the way for future expeditions. Utterly disheartened by Laird's failure, English traders abandoned, for a time, the idea of making money out of this part of West Africa by legitimate commerce. In the meanwhile, however, Mr. Beecroft, who was then Superintendent at Fernando Po, devoted his attention to exploring the various mouths of the Niger, ascending the Niger itself as far as the confluence, in 1835, in a steamer of the West African Company (the *Quorra*), and again in 1840, in a vessel belonging to Mr. Robert Jamieson of Glasgow, when he reached a spot within forty miles of Boussa. The accounts which he sent home awakened the interest in Mungo Park's

* A statue of Richard Lander stands in Lemon Street, Truro, his native town.

river, and the matter was taken up by philanthropists eager to suppress the slave-trade. With this new movement was associated the name of Thomas Fowell Buxton—the Friend of Africa—and to his untiring advocacy was due the fact that money was freely subscribed by private individuals and voted by Parliament to fit out an expedition for the purpose of reclaiming the savage. This was to be no speculative trading venture, but a Government expedition, intended to open up the country and endeavour to induce the natives to substitute commerce for the inhuman traffic in slaves. Such was the idea of the famous expedition of 1841,* and if money could have ensured its success it should have been pre-eminently successful. Three steamers, the *Albert*, the *Soudan*, and the *Wilberforce*, were fitted out regardless of expense, officered by the Royal Navy, provided with missionaries, linguists, and gentlemen of various scientific attainments, and despatched from our shores in May, 1841, with the good wishes and prayers of the whole British nation.

The principal officers associated with this expedition were Captains H. D. Trotter, Bird-Allen, and William Allen, of the Royal Navy; Surgeons McWilliam, Marshall, Pritchett, Thomson, and Nightingale; Rev. J. F. Schön and Mr. Samuel Crowther,† missionaries; Dr. Vogel, botanist; Dr. Stanger, geologist; and several mineralogists and naturalists. Of Europeans there were altogether 145 and of natives 133, all men specially selected and of proved ability. No stone was left unturned to make this expedition the success of the age, and the instructions to the commanders were embodied in a voluminous despatch, framed to meet every possible emergency.

* "A Narrative of the Expedition sent by Her Majesty's Government to the River Niger in 1841," by Captain W. Allen, R.N. (1848). "Journals of the Rev. J. F. Schön and Mr. Samuel Crowther" (1842). "Medical History of the Expedition to the Niger," by Dr. McWilliam (1843). "A Private Journal Kept During the Niger Expedition," by W. Simpson (1843). "Article in *Bentley's Magazine*," 1843, by Duncan, etc.

† A freed slave, afterwards Bishop of the Niger. *Vide* Chapter XVII.

The chief object was the suppression of the oversea slave trade, and the commissioners were instructed to endeavour to persuade the various chiefs of the advantages to be derived from commerce and free labour; to make treaties, give presents when necessary, and to purchase land for the erection of forts. Moreover they were empowered to make arrangements for the purchase of a tract of land sufficiently extensive for occupation as a model farm, all necessary agricultural implements being sent out with the expedition. Finally, the members of the expedition were forbidden to trade with the natives, it being considered that to do so might frustrate the main objects for which it was despatched. It was well known that the greatest danger likely to be encountered would be the climate, and every precaution was taken for the preservation of health; a set of regulations was issued to each vessel, and nothing seems to have been forgotten—even respirators were provided for any of the white crew who should be forced to come on deck at night-time.

Although the three steamers left England in May, they did not reach the Niger mouth until the middle of August, having stopped at the various African islands and at most of the ports on the West Coast for the purpose of obtaining fuel: thus the river was entered within a month of the worst season of the year, and the fourth death since leaving England occurred on the first day in Niger waters. From that time malaria of the most malignant type raged on board the vessels, which became nothing more than floating hospitals. Still, they managed to push on up the river, and the officers manfully carried out their instructions in the matter of interviewing the native chiefs and making treaties, which in reality proved of little value. From the Attah of Iddah a plot of land six miles long by four miles wide at the confluence* of the Niger and Benué was obtained, whereon to establish the model farm.† On the arrival of the expedition at the

* Now Lokoja.

† The land in question was ceded by the Attah "to his sister, the Queen of England," but, after the return of the expedition to

confluence about the middle of September, the agricultural implements were unloaded, and the party intended to commence the farming operations was landed ; all the previously arranged details were carried out to the letter ; huts were built, the ground cleared and planted, and, with a steam-launch left in charge for emergencies, Captain Trotter considered that this part of his programme had been thoroughly well performed. The little settlement was now left to its own devices, while the expedition proceeded to explore the coast line and the Middle Niger. Death had, however, already commenced to play havoc with both Europeans and natives, and it was found necessary to send one vessel back to the sea with the sick, many of whom only lived to find a last resting-place by the side of former Niger explorers in the cemetery of Fernando Po.

Commander W. Allen, whose former experience of the river should have given great weight to his opinions, strongly advocated the return to the sea of the whole expedition. He was, however, overruled by Captain Trotter and Commander Bird-Allen, who were both unwilling to abandon the enterprise after so short a trial, and accordingly the *Albert* proceeded up the Middle Niger, while the *Wilberforce* was despatched down stream to explore the coast line. The result is a melancholy tale ; the *Wilberforce* (Commander W. Allen) made for Fernando Po, where on 1st October she met her companion, the *Soudan*, and where the little grave-yard—already well filled with Niger victims—received the remains of several of her crew. Before leaving for a sea voyage Commander W. Allen commissioned Mr. Beecroft to conduct an expedition up the Niger in the *Ethiope*, a trading steamer belonging to Mr. Robert Jamieson, for the relief of the *Albert* ; and the *Soudan*, whose crew had now somewhat recruited its strength, was also instructed to reascend the river for a similar purpose. The *Ethiope* left Fernando Po on the 7th October, and met the *Albert* coming down stream at Stirling Island on the 13th, the *Soudan* joining England, the British Government declined to ratify this part of the treaty. The price agreed to be paid was £45.

the two vessels at the Nun mouth on the 16th. The *Albert* had ascended the Middle Niger to Egga, but her crew had suffered so terribly from the climate, that, but for the timely arrival of the *Ethiope*, it is doubtful if she could have made her way to Fernando Po. The *Wilberforce* had already started on a cruise, and the *Albert* and *Soudan*, having buried their dead, and invalided home Captain Trotter and others, followed suit.*

For six months the three vessels visited Ascension and other islands, and then Captain W. Allen (now in command of the expedition) assembled them at Fernando Po to arrange further plans. It was generally agreed that some further attempt should be made to carry out the instructions that had been given them on leaving England, though it is very apparent from the various accounts that have been published that a return to the Niger was not by any means popular. Be that as it may, Captain W. Allen decided to attack the pestilential river again, though fortunately despatches arrived from England in the nick of time ordering the expedition to abandon everything. The model farm, however, was to be relieved, and with this intention the *Wilberforce* was sent up to the confluence, while the rest of the expedition returned to England.

The voyage of the *Wilberforce* (under Lieutenant Webb) up to the confluence and back took twenty-six days, and resulted in the death of two out of the eight Europeans on board. The model farm was found to be in a miserable state, the black labourers having become mutinous, and the little party having suffered from the attacks of the Fulahs. It was, therefore, considered advisable to finally abandon the settlement, and the stores and colonists were removed. This having been done, the vessel returned to Fernando Po, and eventually reached Plymouth in November, 1842. Thus ended the most unfortunate expedition in Niger history; the three steamers had averaged fifty days in the river, and

* Captain Bird-Allen died on 25th October, 1841, and was buried at Fernando Po.

had lost forty-nine Europeans out of a total of 145 ; the cost had been £80,000, and the results had been practically *nil*. Never did the dreams of African philanthropists receive a ruder awakening.

For some time after this the Niger was absolutely tabooed ; its name was mentioned only in whispers, and the British public regarded it as an unlucky, pestilential spot, out of which no good could ever come. Though neglected at home, however, for the next ten years or so, the Niger districts were not being forgotten by those Englishmen who were living in the neighbourhood, and some excellent work was being done—notably by Governor Beecroft, to whom we have already referred. This remarkable man was born near Whitby in 1790, and entered the merchant service when quite young. He was taken prisoner by the French in 1805, but soon managed to escape, only, however, to be recaptured at once. Four times was this repeated, but the French eventually became careful of their prisoner, and succeeded in keeping him in durance vile until 1814. After this, Beecroft accompanied Sir E. Parry to Davis Straits, reaching Discoe, 70° N. Lat. ; and in 1829 he went out with Colonel Nicolls to Fernando Po, for the purpose of assisting in the suppression of the slave-trade. There he remained for twenty-five years, during which time he devoted his leisure to exploring the Delta regions. From 1835 to 1850 he laboured incessantly along the coast-line of the Bights, several times ascending the Niger by its various outlets, and the Cross River (old Calabar) for two hundred miles. He also explored the Gaboon, and sent home at different times most valuable information. In 1843 he was made Spanish Governor of Fernando Po, and in 1850 Her Britannic Majesty's Consul, in which latter capacity he watched over British interests in the Oil Rivers. Honour to whom honour is due, and without a doubt John Beecroft was the man who established British prestige in the Oil Rivers, over which thirty years after his death* the British Government proclaimed a protectorate.

* Beecroft died at Fernando Po in June, 1854:

CHAPTER IV.

TWO SUCCESSFUL EXPEDITIONS.

Richardson, Overweg, and Barth—Barth's Experiences—His Energy—His Five Volumes—Overweg's Adventures—His Death—Barth's Subsequent Wanderings—The Niger Expedition of 1854—Dr. Baikie, R.N.—Exploring The Benué—The Voyage of the *Pleiad*.

SLOW, tedious, and expensive both in lives and in money had, so far, been the exploration of the countries of the Niger. Little had been done during the half-century following Park's discovery of the river to open up commercial relations with the natives; the information collected during the fifty years was, however, sufficient to prove that there was a real future before these regions, if means could only be found to bring home to the people the advantages to be derived from intercourse with non-slave-trading Europeans. It fell to the lot of the two subsequent expeditions—one from the north and one from the south—to finally complete the work that had been begun, and to add considerably to the knowledge of the interior.

The first of these expeditions was entrusted to Mr. James Richardson, and with him were associated two German gentlemen, Drs. Overweg* and Barth,† the latter, on the death of his two companions, eventually succeeding to the command. The expedition was fitted out at the expense of the British Government,‡ much on the same

* A Prussian geologist.

† Heinrich Barth was born in Hamburg in 1821; died, 1865.

‡ The fact that Barth was a German has been put forward as a claim that Germany had a right, by priority of exploration, to certain parts of the Western Sudan. This can best be dispelled by quoting the words of the distinguished traveller: "After Mr. Richardson had, in March, 1851, fallen a victim to the noble enter-

lines as the first of Clapperton's expeditions; in fact, Richardson was directed to follow Clapperton's route, and accordingly the little party left Tripoli in March, 1850, and travelled south to Murzuk. Thence they crossed the desert to Air or Asben, arriving at Tagelel in the following January. They had thus followed the caravan route which traverses the desert almost parallel to, but considerably to the west of that taken by Denham and Clapperton. It was an arduous journey, and one fraught with much danger and many difficulties, the country being the resort of countless bands of Tuareg robbers, ever on the look out for plunder, but the little expedition was well armed and able to resist attack, though frequently robbed under cover of darkness. At Tagelel the members of the mission decided to separate, their finances being at a low ebb, and it being known that where a party of three Europeans travel together large sums are extorted by the natives, whereas single travellers are allowed to pass through the country without much notice being taken of them. Each of the three travellers had assumed Arabic names, in order to ingratiate themselves with the Mohammedans; thus Richardson was known as Yacub, and Barth as Abdul Kerrim; they, moreover, were dressed as Arabs, and Barth not infrequently was taken for one, though they never attempted, when questioned, to disguise the fact that they were Europeans, since any deception, if detected, might have aroused the suspicions of a most suspicious people.

The rendezvous of the party (about the 1st April) was fixed at Kuka, the Bornu capital, whither Richardson proceeded direct, while Barth and Overweg took

prise to which he had devoted his life, Her Majesty's Government honoured me with their confidence, and in authorising me to carry out the objects of the expedition, placed sufficient means at my disposal for the purpose." Again, he says: "In geographical enterprise in general none have done more than the English, while, in Central Africa in particular, very little has been achieved by any but English travellers."

more circuitous routes.* From Tagelel the two Germans travelled together as far as Tassawa, in company with caravans, and meeting everywhere with hospitality at the hands of the natives. Here they parted, to meet again some four months later, at Kuka. The results of the journeys of these three remarkable men have been handed down to posterity in the shape of two valuable literary productions—the journals of Richardson, and Barth's description of his own travels, probably the most complete work of its kind ever published.† Richardson, within two months of parting from his companions, unfortunately succumbed to the hardships of the journey and the effects of the climate at Ngurutuwa, on the borders of Bornu, and Barth decided to take upon himself to continue the expedition on behalf of the British Government.

Barth, on leaving Tassawa, proceeded south to Gazawa, whence he found his way to the important town of Katsena. "The immense mass of the wall," he says, "measuring in its lower parts not less than thirty feet, and its wide circumference, made a deep impression upon me. The town (if town it may be called) presented a most cheerful rural scene, with its detached light cottages, and its stubble-fields, shaded with a variety of fine trees; but I suspect that this ground was not entirely covered with dwellings, even during the most glorious period of Katsena." Here, ‡ though hospitably treated, he was

* As matters turned out, Barth was the only one of the three who kept his appointment; he reached Kuka on 2nd April, Richardson died *en route*, and Overweg joined Barth at Kuka on 7th May.

† "Narrative of a Mission to Central Africa in 1850-51," by the late James Richardson. Two vols.; London, 1853. "Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa, being a Journal of an Expedition Undertaken in 1849-55," by Dr. H. Barth. Five vols.; London, 1857.

‡ Many villages mentioned by Barth and early travellers have now disappeared; others have changed their places, although retaining their names. Wells frequently run dry in these regions, and it is found easier to move a village to a new water supply than to conduct the water to the old village.

forced to remain for ten days, and he considered himself fortunate in being granted permission to pursue his journey with so short a detention, since in these parts it is the custom for the governor or head-man to detain his visitors until he has exhausted their stock of presents. The next large town visited was the capital of Hausaland—Kano—where Clapperton had sojourned during each of his expeditions, and Barth has much to say of this great emporium of the Western Sudan, which, during his residence of a month on this occasion, he had full opportunity of exploring. Leaving the Hausa country, he travelled north-east into Bornu, the frontier of which he crossed on the 13th March, 1851, and, after varied experiences, he entered Kuka on the 2nd April.

A vast tract of country had been traversed in reaching the capital of Bornu, and though only a portion of it was unexplored, yet the descriptions of the land furnished by Clapperton had been most meagre, so that to this day Barth has made himself the authority on the country. The reader who takes up the great traveller's five solid volumes cannot fail to be utterly astounded at the amount of information which every page contains, and how any African explorer could have the energy to do a tenth of what Barth did must remain for ever a wonder. His sole idea seems to have been to collect information from the people, and no sooner had he taken up his quarters for the night in a village or town, than he sought out the most intelligent natives and commenced to extract information from them, making copious notes in his journal before going to rest. He became well versed in the Hausa language (the *lingua franca* of the Western and Central Sudan) and in various dialects, while his knowledge of Arabic caused him to be regarded by the more educated Mohammedans as a man of vast learning. His position on reaching Kuka was a trying one, since he had almost exhausted his stock of saleable articles, and for a traveller to visit any of these countries without being able to give handsome presents to the high officials places innumerable difficulties in his way. Still, the

Sultan and his vizier received Barth with every mark of kindness, and he was enabled to borrow sufficient money with which to provide himself with immediate necessities, as well as to make himself tolerably comfortable in the quarters which had been assigned to him. He now set about the great object of the expedition, and had soon become thoroughly acquainted with the town and its neighbourhood; he visited the shores of Lake Chad, and had already gained a vast knowledge of the country when, on the 7th May, he was joined by his fellow-countryman and colleague.

Overweg, after separating from Barth, had taken a western route towards Sokoto, and in the course of his journey had witnessed the struggles then going on between the pagan inhabitants of Gober and Maradi and the Mohammedan Fulahs. Retracing his steps, he visited the important town of Zinder, and thence proceeded direct to Kuka, without going south to Kano, as he had originally intended. He had suffered considerably from the climate, and his finances were in a worse state than were even those of his companion, yet his energy had not deserted him, and within three weeks of his arrival at Kuka he was sufficiently recovered in health to continue his travels. Barth had long determined to make an excursion to Adamawa (due south of Bornu), and accordingly, on the 29th May, 1851, he left Kuka with a well-equipped caravan, being accompanied for the first day's march by Overweg, who then started with his portable boat to explore the great Lake of Chad.

Adamawa was new ground; no European had yet set foot in the country, and Barth's enthusiasm, as he neared its frontiers, grew unbounded. "We had now," he writes, "reached the border of Adamawa, the country after which I had been panting so long, and of which I had heard so many interesting accounts, a Mohammedan kingdom engrafted upon a mixed stock of pagan tribes." On the 18th June the Benué River was reached, at the point of its junction with the Faro, and two days later Barth attained the summit of his present ambition and entered

Yola,* the capital of Adamawa. He had, of course, hoped to spend some time in this interesting Fulah province, and learn something of its history and people; but in this he was bitterly disappointed, for Mahomed Lawl,† the Emir, saw in his visit an attempt on the part of his old enemy, Sheik Omar of Bornu, to gain a footing in Adamawa. It was certainly unfortunate that Barth had come from Bornu; had he come from any other direction, doubtless his reception would have been very different, but, as it was, the Sultan, or Sheik, of Bornu had taken the opportunity in his letter recommending the Christian traveller to the care of Mahomed Lawl, to put forward certain claims to portions of the Adamawa frontier territory. Consequently Barth's visit raised a storm in Yola, and on the 24th June he was peremptorily ordered to quit the place, which he felt bound to do with as good a grace as possible. The return journey to Kuka, which occupied a month, was made wearisome by bad weather, and Barth became much weakened by repeated attacks of fever.

In the meanwhile Overweg had been busily engaged in the exploration of Lake Chad, for which purpose a boat had been brought from England. He visited the numerous groups of islands with which the inland sea is studded, and he made friends with the strange, wild people who inhabited them. But, unfortunately, and as Barth bemoans, he was a traveller without method, and he kept no record of his travels, thus denying to the world the benefits of his vast knowledge of a hitherto unexplored region. His more methodical companion, however, had ample opportunity during the following year of making himself acquainted with Overweg's experiences on Lake Chad, since the two friends, from September, 1851, to August, 1852, undertook together a series of expeditions to the eastern States of Kanem,

* Thus named after the royal quarter of Kano.

† Son of Mallam Adama, the original Fulah conqueror of Fumbina and founder of the kingdom of Adamawa, which was called after him;

Baghirmi, and the neighbourhood. These interesting journeys were outside of what are now the limits of British Nigeria, and therefore do not come within the scope of this book, though the master-traveller's description of them is most thrilling. Many a fierce fight did the two plucky Europeans take part in, and many a strange scene did they gaze on, but the pleasure of reading the account of it all is marred by knowing that the last of their many excursions resulted in the death of Overweg. Ever careless of his health, he had gradually become impregnated with malaria, and on the 23rd August, 1852, Barth had the grief and mortification of laying him in his grave by the shores of the great Lake, in the exploration of which he had devoted much of his time, indeed at the sacrifice of his life.

The death of Overweg was, as can be imagined, a terrible blow to Barth, and the loneliness of his situation became so appalling that he determined to at once drown his sorrow in the excitement of a long and arduous journey. Experience had already told him that the eastern countries were too disturbed to permit of his entering them unaccompanied by an armed force; to leave the country and return home by Tripoli, as the Sheik of Bornu tried to persuade him to do, would be to abandon an enterprise which had so far been the greatest success of the century. His mind, therefore, was soon made up—he would proceed west and endeavour to reach Timbuctoo. It was an enormous undertaking, but that was what Barth required, and having formed his plans, he eventually took leave of the Sheik,* and left Kuka on the 25th November, 1852, to commence his memorable journey throughout almost the entire length of the Western Sudan. He was accompanied by eight native servants of various nationalities and two boys, Dyrregu, a Hausa, and Abbega, a Marghi, who had been liberated from slavery by

* Barth, on behalf of the British Government, concluded a treaty with the Sheik of Bornu in August, 1852. It may be here remarked that one of the principal objects of the expedition was to make treaties with all the more important native rulers.

Overweg, and who are particularly worthy of mention from the fact that they followed their master during all his wanderings of the next two years.* The members of the little party were mostly mounted, the provisions and baggage being borne on camels.

From Kuka Barth travelled, by Overweg's original route, to Zinder, the capital of the westernmost province of Bornu, and at that time a town of considerable importance.† There he remained for a month, making various short excursions into the country, and on the 30th January, 1853, he set out for Katsena, which he reached on the 4th February. Two years had passed since his previous visit, but he had not been forgotten, which perhaps, he almost regretted, since all his old friends expected handsome presents. This giving of presents to everyone in authority was, and still is,‡ a great tax on a traveller in these parts, and, as an instance of what was expected in Barth's days, it may be mentioned that he considered it necessary to give to the Fulah Governor of Katsena—by no means an exalted personage—the following presents: "A very fine blue bernouse, a kaftan of fine red cloth, a pair of small pocket pistols, two muslin turbans, a red cap, two loaves of sugar, and some smaller articles." Such gifts to officials are an absolute necessity, and any attempt to curtail them is a false economy, especially where the traveller wishes to make anything like expeditious progress. But, although

* Barth eventually brought them to England and had them educated as Christians, after which they were sent back to their native land, in order that they might assist in spreading the Gospel among the heathens. As events turned out, however, they soon discovered that the knowledge of the world which they had acquired might be turned to more profitable account by trading than by preaching, and consequently they forsook Christianity and embraced Islam. Both became successful traders, and Abbega has long been living in comparative affluence at Lokoja. *Vide* "Up the Niger," page 50.

† Barth called it the "Gate of Soudan." It is now within the French sphere of influence.

‡ *Vide* "Up the Niger," page 299.

the amount spent in this way seems excessive, it must not be forgotten that the traveller and his followers are generally boarded and lodged free of expense, so that it may be reckoned that the presents pay not only for the friendship of the natives, but also the hotel bill for an unlimited stay. At Katsena Barth made many purchases of such goods as were likely to prove acceptable presents to the people further west,* and having been fortunate enough to arrive in the town while the Ghaladima of Sokoto was there on his annual tour of inspection, he was able to make that officer's acquaintance and journey with him to Sokoto. Disturbance in the neighbourhood, however, kept the Ghaladima at Katsena longer than he expected, and it was not until the 21st March that the party set out.

The presence of the Ghaladima and his men in the caravan made travelling easy and comfortable, and, on the 31st March, the camp of the Fulah (Sokoto) army, starting on a campaign, was reached. Alihu, Sultan of the Fulahs and Emir el Mumenin, was himself in command of the army, and received Barth with the highest honour and respect, interchanging presents with him, and finally concluding a treaty of commerce with Great Britain.

After this interesting interview, Alihu departed on his expedition, and Barth proceeded to Wurno, the residential town of the Sultan, where he took up his quarters in the house of the Ghaladima. During his stay of six weeks in Wurno, he paid several visits to Sokoto, and on the return of Alihu, at the end of April, he renewed his acquaintance with that enlightened monarch. From Sokoto the traveller passed to Gando (17th May), and thence to the Niger at Say—a place of importance only because it chanced, a few years ago, to become a landmark in Anglo-French negotiations. His travels west of the Niger, though most interesting, cannot be

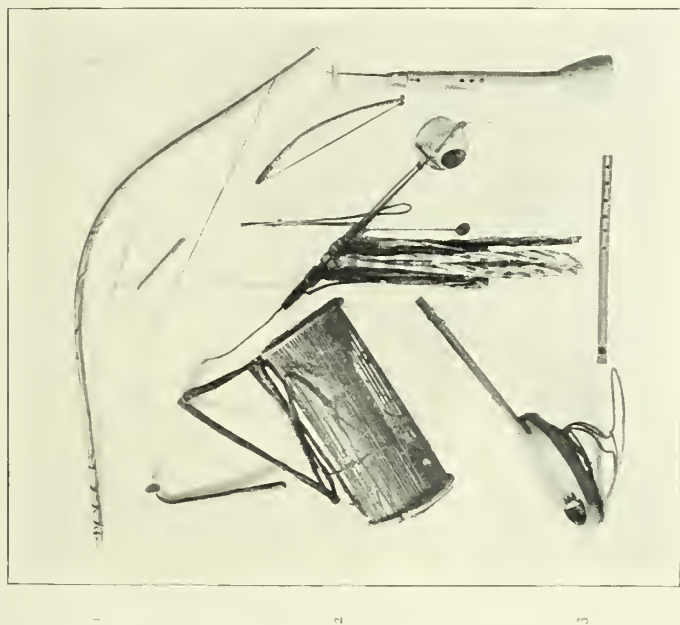
* Chiefly Kano cloth, tobes, and shawls, also native tobacco, and leather articles. "No place in negro-land," says Barth, "is so famous for excellent leather and the art of tanning as Katsena."

considered as covering ground now within the British sphere of influence ; all, therefore, that we need say, is that Timbuctoo was safely reached by the adventurer in September, 1853,* and left again in May of the following year, during which time, it need hardly be added, the amount of information collected was immense.

Barth retraced his steps towards Kuka, following almost the same route by which he had travelled to Timbuctoo, crossing the Niger at Say, and staying for some time at Gando, Sokoto, and Wurno. His journey was not altogether without incident or excitement, and on more than one occasion his life was in danger, yet, while pursuing his way, he had received despatches from England which increased his eagerness to push forward to Bornu—Dr. Vogel (a German scientist) and two non-commissioned officers of the Royal Engineers had been sent out from England in 1853 to his relief. His one object now was to reach Kuka and meet his fellow-countryman, but so slow, by force of circumstances, was his progress, that it was not until the 17th October, 1854, that he entered Kano, and it was the middle of December, before he was welcomed back to Kuka. He had, however, already met Vogel, who was travelling to Zinder, and on reaching Kuka he found the two English sappers (Church and Macguire) waiting to receive him. For a month, therefore, Barth enjoyed the society of his new

* Barth was the third European to enter Timbuctoo ; the first was an Englishman, Major Laing (18th August, 1826) ; the second a Frenchman, Rene Caillié (1828). As an instance of the manner in which French writers miswrite history, Jules Duval, in his biography of René Caillié, omits all mention of Laing ; René Caillié's monument in the cemetery of Pont l'Abbé is inscribed, " the only European who has visited and described Timbuctoo " ; while Félix Dubois, in his " Timbuctoo the Mysterious " (1896), says that Barth resided in Timbuctoo for only a month, and saw nothing of the town. As a matter of fact, Barth was at Timbuctoo for *eight* months, and the chapters of his book are sufficient proof that he acquired a vast amount of information about the town. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that M. Félix Dubois was the first European to become thoroughly acquainted with Timbuctoo and its people.

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MOHAMMEDAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

1. The "To."
2. Drum and stick.
3. Three-string guitar.
4. A flute.
5. Oboe.
6. Violin.
7. Violin bow.



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NORTH NIGERIAN WEAPONS.

1. Bludgeon of wood.
2. Matchet.
3. Common native sword.
4. Wrist dagger.
5. Knives with sheaths.
6. Two arrows showing barbs.
7. Bow.
8. Quiver and arrows.

friends, after which the party divided, Vogel and Macguire departing on the 21st January in the direction of Yakoba (Bautshi) and Adamawa, while Barth and Church* eventually left Kuka on their journey home on the 4th May, arriving in London on the 6th September, 1855.†

Barth was still wandering in the Western Sudan when the second expedition of this period left England. Known as the "Niger Expedition of 1854," it was the first successful undertaking from the south, and as such is a landmark in the story of the great river. Before, however, entering into details about the expedition, it will be well to say something concerning the causes which led to the British Government again turning its attention to the Lower Niger, which for many years it had given up, as a useless expenditure of lives and money. So convinced was Macgregor Laird of the value of these regions for purposes of trade, that, ever since his first connection with the opening up of the Niger, he had done all in his power to persuade others to co-operate with him in laying the foundations of this new outlet for British merchandise.

Since his first visit to the Niger in 1832, the only expedition despatched from England, it will be remembered, was that of 1841. With this he had no connection, his personal experience of the country convincing him that its plans (framed by Government, under the inspiration of the Anti-Slavery party) were such as could not fail to lead to a wholesale loss of life, disgusting the country with the very name of the Niger and putting a stop to all attempts to explore the river for at least a generation.

* Church had quarrelled with Vogel, and therefore decided to return to England. Macguire deserted his leader at Yakoba (Bautshi), and was afterwards murdered by the natives. Vogel met the same fate in the following year, after completing what must have been a remarkable journey eastward to Wara, the capital of Wadai, though his papers unfortunately never came to light.

† Barth was made a C.B., and received the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, who also awarded to Corporal J. F. Church a watch and chain "for his scientific observations."

Private protests being of no avail, he expressed his views fully in the *Westminster Review*, No. 66. He had copies of his able article widely distributed, and finally he attended the farewell meeting at Exeter Hall in order to protest to the last against the folly of the undertaking. There, as long as his voice endured, he struggled to make his warning heard, but he was hooted and howled at by an audience resolved to listen to none but the prophets of smooth things. The outcome of the expedition of 1841 we have already described, and no one regretted its lamentable failure more than the one man who had foreseen it. But, since he was aware of the cause of the failure, Laird did not abandon hope; on the contrary, he continued to push his projects among influential men by all possible means. At length he saw a glimmer of light; in 1852 he obtained a contract from the Government, and established the African Steamship Company, with a monthly communication with the various ports on the coast as far as Fernando Po; then came the opportunity for which he had waited so long.

It was in this same year (1852) that news was received from Barth of his journey to Adamawa, and his discovery of the Benué,* which he concluded to be the same river as had hitherto been called the Tsadda or Chadda. Here was a new geographical problem, to endeavour to solve which, as well as to "meet and afford assistance" to Drs. Barth and Vogel, the British Government resolved to send out a single vessel. Laird's enthusiasm on matters pertaining to this region, and the fact that he himself had navigated the Niger, at once gave him a claim to plan out the proposed expedition, and the Admiralty entered

* "The word belongs to the Batta language, where water is called *bee* or *b*; but in kindred dialects it is called *bi*. *Nuwé* means 'the mother,' and the whole name means 'Mother of Water.'"—Barth. The earlier English travellers, imagining that it flowed into or from Lake Chad, called it Chadda, or Tsadda; Laird called it Shari, confusing it with the river of that name which feeds Lake Chad. The native names are: Etshi (Bornu), Furoji (Nupé), Baki n'Rua (Hausa), Ehaloji (Igbira), Nu (Kurorofa), Ujimini dudu (Igara).

into a contract with him to build and equip a suitable vessel. This was the *Pleiad*, built at Birkenhead by Mr. John Laird, and fitted out with all care for the peculiar service for which she was destined.

The command of the expedition was given to Mr. Beecroft, who was to join at Fernando Po, while the other Europeans consisted of Dr. William Balfour Baikie, R.N. ; Mr. D. J. May, second master ; Mr. J. T. Dalton, zoologist ; Surgeon T. J. Hutchinson ; T. C. Taylor, sailing-master ; and seven others. The remainder of the crew were natives, fifty-four in number, and so well was everything arranged and carried out that all the Europeans on board the *Pleiad* returned to England little the worse for their voyage. Experience had taught Mr. Laird that the failures of previous expeditions had been due principally to climatic influences which it was quite possible to avoid. He therefore decided that it was desirable that the vessel should enter the river during the rainy season, and accordingly she started on her voyage on the 20th May, 1854.* Two other points are noticeable about this expedition ; first, that the number of white men employed was kept as low as possible, while all the heavy work was done by the black crew ; second, that quinine was freely used as a preventive of fever.†

The primary object, at any rate as far as the Government was concerned, was the exploration of the Benué and the relief of Barth, but by his contract Mr. Laird was also permitted to carry on trade with the natives whenever opportunity offered, so that the *Pleiad* was well stocked with likely goods, and it may be here mentioned that

* "Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Binue, in 1854," by William Balfour Baikie ; London, 1856: "Journal of an Expedition up the Niger and Tshadda Rivers, Undertaken by Macgregor Laird, Esq., in Connection with the British Government, in 1854," by the Rev. Samuel Crowther ; London, 1855. "Narrative of the Niger, Tschadda, and Benué Exploration," by T. J. Hutchinson ; London, 1855.

† A dose of five grains was administered morning and evening to everyone on board the *Pleiad*.

the produce obtained in exchange for the cargo realised £2,000, which was considered most satisfactory.* On arriving at Fernando Po, it was found that Beecroft, the commander of the expedition, had unfortunately died some time previously; his place was therefore taken by Dr. Baikie,† who determined forthwith to carry out the instructions of the Admiralty and of Mr. Laird.

On the 12th July the little *Pleiad* crossed the bar at the Nun mouth of the Niger, and anchored off Alburkah Island, where she was forced to remain for the next two days while her engines underwent repair. The ascent then commenced, but after a few miles the *Pleiad* ran aground on Sunday Island, and was not afloat again until the 17th; a similar mishap occurred two days later, showing the importance of being provided with good pilots even in such a large river. The navigation now became easier, and Abo was reached on the 21st. Here the expedition remained for three days, interviewed the chief, made friends with the people, and finally, after leaving a native missionary (Simon Jonas) behind, departed with the good wishes of all. A week later they arrived at Iddah, the capital of the Igara country, where they were received in audience by the Attah, who, however, did not prove a very satisfactory person to deal with, though he expressed himself as desirous of opening trade with white men, and anxious to have native missionaries established in his country.

Up to this point nothing of any great importance had occurred, though it was satisfactory to find that the natives of the Lower Niger still retained the good impression of Englishmen which they had obtained from

* This did not pay expenses, but the Government afterwards indemnified Mr. Laird, "On the ground that an individual ought not to bear the expense of an exploring voyage chiefly for Government objects."

† It is perhaps remarkable that, in many of these early Niger expeditions the commander's death necessitated the work being carried out by the next senior; Oudney's expedition was completed by Clapperton; Clapperton's second expedition by Lander; Richardson's by Barth; Beecroft's by Baikie.

former expeditions ; that they were still anxious to trade ; and that they were willing to allow missionaries to settle down amongst them.* But the object of the expedition was not the Lower Niger, for its energies were to be directed towards the exploration of the Benué (or, as it was then generally called, the Tsadda), and, therefore, until the site of the old model farm was reached, the work of the expedition can hardly be considered to have commenced. Little was known of this magnificent affluent of the Niger ; it had been navigated by previous expeditions only as far as Dagbo (some seventy miles from the confluence), and although Barth had crossed it hundreds of miles higher up, whence it came and through what countries it flowed were still matters of conjecture. There was, consequently, as may be imagined, a certain amount of excitement in store for Dr. Baikie and his companions when, on the 7th August, the *Pleiad* began to plough her way up the unknown river. The one great drawback to success was time. It was known that within a few weeks the waters would have fallen to such an extent as to make navigation almost an impossibility, and, owing to the green state of the wood which had to be burned, great difficulty was found in keeping up steam. Progress was necessarily slow ; thus, on the first day only six miles were covered ; on the second day scarcely as many ; but eventually this difficulty was overcome by purchasing dry wood from the villages which were frequently passed. The people were pagans, suffering much from the constant incursions of the Mohammedan Fulahs, and, being miserably poor, were easily satisfied with the small presents which were given to them by the members of the expedition. Dagbo (the furthest point reached by the Alburkah in 1833) was passed on the 18th August, after which the little steamer experienced great difficulty in keeping to the channel ; sand-banks were a frequent annoyance, and she was, almost every day, aground for an hour or two. Still, she

* At the request of Mr. Laird, the Church Missionary Society allowed the Rev. S. Crowther and a staff of native missionaries to accompany the expedition. *Vide* Chapter XVII.

continued her slow ascent, while the opportunity of the frequent stoppages was taken advantage of for petty trading, and to induce friendly intercourse with the natives who crowded down to the banks of the river.

The scenery of the Benué was found to be far grander than that of the Lower Niger, ranges of mountains taking the place of the ever-present swampy flats of the Delta regions; "the neighbouring soil," says Baikie, "teemed with a diversified vegetation, and the frequent recurrence of hill and dale pleased and gratified the eye. Nor was animal life wanting, for from our mast-head we enjoyed the novel sight of a large herd of elephants, upwards of a hundred in number, crossing a little streamlet not much more than a mile from us." The great beast, in those days, appears to have been fairly abundant, and as, an instance of the amount of ivory in the country, it may be mentioned that the *Pleiad* purchased 620 lb. in one day in the neighbourhood of Zhibu. By the end of September they had ascended two hundred miles above Dagbo, without encountering any resistance from the natives, and on the 25th they paid a visit to the Sultan of Hamaruwa (Muri), the first Fulah State which they had met with. Their reception was most cordial, and they were much struck by the state of civilisation in which they found the Mohammedan inhabitants living. No reliable information could be obtained of Dr. Barth, though several native merchants stated that they had heard of a white traveller as having been at various places in the north, so Baikie decided to endeavour to reach Yola as quickly as possible. The water now showed signs of falling, and knowing that, when once it commenced, the fall would be rapid, and that thus the *Pleiad* might not be able to return to the confluence that year, it was deemed advisable to take her no further up stream, but to proceed in the gig. On this adventurous voyage Baikie was accompanied by only one European (Mr. May), but having been led to believe that Yola was only a few miles off, he fully expected to be able to reach that important town, if not to get as far as the Faro River, before being forced

to return to the *Pleiad* at Gurowa (the port of Hamaruwa). The boat travelled against the current with all the speed that the oars could drive it, but it was slow work, and it soon became evident that it would be impossible to reach Yola. Two important native villages were passed, Lau and Djin, at both of which the pagan inhabitants were at first disinclined to be friendly, and the travellers began to understand that the novel sight of the steamer had been accountable for the friendship of the tribes on the voyage to Gurowa. The gig was regarded merely as a superior build of canoe, and the Englishmen, at a distance, being easily mistaken for Fulahs—the dreaded foes of all the pagans—the villagers were everywhere prepared to meet an attack. Fortunately, the party was never forced to have recourse to arms, but on reaching Dulti on the third day, the attitude of the natives became so threatening that the gig was obliged to beat a hasty retreat, being pursued down stream by a flotilla of canoes.

This was proof enough for Baikie that it was useless attempting any further exploration that year, but as he added some forty miles to the chart of the river, it cannot be said that the voyage was in vain. They returned with the current at a fair speed, and when in sight of Gurowa, were astonished to find that the *Pleiad* had disappeared. This was naturally a bitter disappointment, and they could only conjecture that the steamer had either left to obtain wood, or because the officers imagined that the river was falling. The latter eventually proved the reason, though as a matter of fact it was quite an unnecessary precaution, for the water was actually at the time rising. Still there was nothing to be done but to row on down the river and overtake the steamer; the Krumen set to work with a will and pulled eighty miles on the first day, finally coming on the *Pleiad* about noon on the second day, high and dry on a sand-bank, where she had been for forty-eight hours.

The voyage back to the sea was without mishap and devoid of any startling incident, the expedition reaching

Fernando Po on the 7th November, and England in the following February. Reviewing its proceedings after a lapse of nearly fifty years, one is rather inclined to under-estimate its results. Nowadays such a voyage would be considered almost as a pleasure trip ; in 1855 it was regarded as one of the most remarkable pieces of exploration of the age. Let us, however, sum up what Baikie did. In the first place, he did what no one before him had succeeded in doing, spending four months in Niger regions without the loss of a single member of his expedition ; secondly, he explored and compiled a chart of more than 250 miles of a new river ; thirdly, he never fired a shot at a native ; fourthly, he was instrumental in opening up an entirely new country to trade ; and lastly, he gave to the world a vast store of information on such subjects as ethnology, philology, and natural history ; while, with the aid of Mr. Crowther and his staff, he established missionary stations among the pagans, thereby laying the foundations of a new form of civilisation. Such were some of the results of the expedition of 1854, and, though it did not succeed in joining hands with Barth, its labours, as we shall see, eventually bore good fruit.

CHAPTER V.

TRADING VENTURES.

The Opening up of the Niger to Trade—The Expedition of 1857—Macgregor Laird—The Central African Company, Limited—Laird's Hopes for Niger Trade—Laird's Death—Baikie and Glover—The Company of African Merchants.

AS an instance of the rapid development of a new land, there is perhaps nothing more interesting in the commercial history of England than the opening up of the Niger River to trade. Fifty years ago there was not a single store-shed north of the Delta; to-day the banks of the main river and its branches, to a distance of nine hundred miles from the sea, are lined with British trading stations. How all this has been brought about requires a little explanation.

In the last chapter we mentioned that the *Pleiad* had been equipped by Mr. Macgregor Laird partly for trading purposes, and so pleased was this indefatigable gentleman with the results of his enterprise that henceforth he laboured heart and soul to develop the trade with this region. British merchants were apathetic in the matter, and, although a memorial was presented to the Government, it was two years before anything was done, and then, but for the energies of certain philanthropists, the Government would have refused to support any undertaking connected with the Niger. Ever since the disastrous muddle of 1841, Ministers dreaded the very mention of its name, and, after the successful voyage of the *Pleiad*, their hands were sufficiently full with foreign affairs in the East. The Crimean War and the troubles in India gave them plenty to think about without embarking on what they considered a chimerical enterprise in West Africa. But each rebuff only spurred Laird on to greater

exertion, and, in 1856, the Government began to listen to his views, which were set forth in a series of voluminous despatches. Finally, the Admiralty entered into a contract with him (for five years from the 1st January, 1857) by which he bound himself to place and keep on the Niger River a fully found iron steamer, to convey up and down the river, and to and from Fernando Po, any passengers whom the Government might name, he to receive in return an annual subsidy which was to commence at £8,000, and was to be reduced by £500 per annum afterwards. This was a step in the right direction, and moreover showed that the Government was anxious to open up the Niger; still, the subsidy was far from sufficient to enable Laird to carry out his great scheme, though he did not hesitate to commence fulfilling the terms of his contract. He determined that, come what might, his new venture should have every chance of success, and accordingly, early in 1857, he despatched the *Dayspring* from England with a full cargo of merchandise, and instructions for carrying out his new plans. After careful consideration, he had come to the conclusion that in order to develop trade with the natives on the river banks, it was necessary to have fixed trading stations established on shore, and well stocked with the requirements of the people, while the steamers should maintain frequent intercourse between these factories and the sea.

The command of this new expedition was entrusted to Dr. Baikie, whom the Government had appointed Consular Agent at Lokoja, while Lieutenant (afterwards Sir John) Glover, R.N., and the Rev. Samuel Crowther were despatched as cartographer and missionary respectively. The *Dayspring*, with a sailing vessel in tow, entered the Niger in July, 1857, and proceeded to carry out Laird's instructions. Three trading stations were established, viz. at Abo, Laird's port (Onitsha), and at Laird's Town (Gbebe, a little below the confluence), after which the steamer endeavoured to open up the trade of the Middle Niger. In doing this, however, a catastrophe occurred:

the *Dayspring* was wrecked on a rock* near Jebba, above Rabba (two hundred miles from the confluence), and had to be abandoned, entailing a loss to Mr. Laird not only of the vessel itself, but also of the valuable cargo of shea-butter which she had on board. The unfortunate crew remained on shore at Jebba for a year,† during which time Glover and a small party visited Boussa and made the overland journey to Lagos.‡

It was impossible now for Laird to withdraw from the Niger; he had to carry out his contract with the Admiralty as regards steamers, and he had to look after the factories which he had established (at a cost of some £5,000) on shore, consequently, in the following year, he equipped two new steamers (£17,000) to proceed to the Niger. These were the *Sunbeam* and the *Rainbow*, the former reaching the river on the 30th June, 1858, and the latter in September of the same year. The *Sunbeam* discharged her cargo at the three factories, and then went on to Rabba for the relief of the crew of the *Dayspring*, who had transferred themselves thither from Jebba. These were brought down to the confluence; the *Sunbeam* loaded up with produce collected at the factories, and arrived in England in February, 1859, while the *Rainbow* remained on the river for the purpose of carrying out the contract with the Admiralty. The results so far had proved anything but satisfactory; the value of the produce brought down had amounted to barely £3,000; the *Dayspring* had become a total wreck, and a further loss of £1,600 was incurred by the destruction by fire of the factory at Laird's Port.

Laird had already become aware that the capital which he could afford to put into the business was not sufficient for its certain and rapid development; he, therefore, set about the formation of a joint-stock

* Now known to the natives as the "Ju-ju rock."

† The sailing vessel returned to England with a full cargo valued at £4,000.

‡ A native servant's account of this and of subsequent events will be found in "Up the Niger," Appendix I. (C):

company, and in May, 1858, he issued a prospectus of the "Central African Company, Limited," with a capital of £100,000 in 10,000 £10 shares. The public was invited to subscribe, Laird agreeing to transfer to the Company, from the 1st July, 1858, for the sum of £5,000, all his interests in the Niger, and to reserve the management in his own hands. This was not, however, a time when joint-stock companies were in favour, and only eighty-one shares were taken up. The accounts kept by Laird between himself and the proposed company, balanced up to the 31st March, 1859, showed a deficit of some £25,000, which, it will be thought, should have been sufficient to deter an ordinary man of business from attempting to continue what looked like throwing good money after bad. But the reader will have already discovered for himself that Macgregor Laird was no ordinary man, and it was his firm conviction that it required only time and capital to make the Niger trade a highly remunerative one. He, moreover, maintained that the pecuniary loss was more than made up for by the results which, in his report to the shareholders, he enumerated as follows: The wreck of the *Dayspring* was the immediate cause of the establishment of the overland route from Rabba to Lagos, and the residence for a year of the crew among the natives showed that they were friendly to European traders; the establishment of factories on shore had produced the benefits of legitimate trade, and the opening of mission stations with schools and chapels; while the voyage of the *Sunbeam* to Rabba proved that the river was navigable, for a vessel of 390 tons and drawing nine feet of water, for a distance of 500 miles from the sea.

In 1859 Laird, having failed to form a company, continued his project single-handed, despatching the *Sunbeam* on her second voyage with cargo, which ultimately realised £8,000. At the moment, however, when matters were thus commencing to show an improvement, an unexpected interruption occurred. The natives of the Delta looked on the trading-steamers' visits as an

encroachment on their privileges, more especially as they themselves were given no opportunity of trading with the Europeans; accordingly, as the vessels were returning to sea in the autumn of 1859, a heavy fire was opened on them from the banks. Laird reported the circumstances to the Admiralty, and he was promised the convoy of a gunboat for the following season. Unfortunately, the gunboat did not arrive at the mouth of the river until November, when it was too late to ascend, and Laird's agent deemed it advisable to try to dispose of his cargo among the Delta natives. A friendly palaver with the chief resulted in the establishment of a factory at Angiama (where Lander had been mortally wounded), and the natives proved keen traders.

Laird now saw a great opening for increased trade, and he came to the conclusion that by placing trading stations at intervals along the banks of the Lower Niger, not only would they prove remunerative, but the natives would thus be induced to a greater friendship for the white traders. While forming his new plans, and when about to realise his long-cherished dream of success, Macgregor Laird—the father of British trade on the Niger—unfortunately died.* What might have resulted had fate decreed otherwise it is impossible to say; one thing, however, is certain: the death of this great pioneer marked an epoch in the progress of commerce with Central Africa, such as the death of Mungo Park had marked in the progress of discovery. He was a man whose mind was for ever steadily fixed on the future; he overlooked all obstacles which patience and renewed effort could remove,† and had he been spared to continue his work,

* January, 1861. It must not be imagined that Mr. Laird's sole idea with regard to the development of Central Africa was of a mercenary nature; he had far higher and nobler aims; he was well known as a supporter of missionary enterprise, while his suggestions for the restrictions of the slave-trade, embodied in an able pamphlet, were published only a month before his death.

† It may be mentioned that the motto of the Laird family is, "*Spero meliora*"—as far as Macgregor Laird himself was concerned, a very appropriate one.

he would, no doubt, have surmounted every difficulty and taken a foremost place on the roll of the makers of the British Empire. This is no fulsome panegyric, for the outcome of Laird's labours can be seen to-day in the commercial prosperity of these regions.

To return to events on the Niger: the fact of the *Sunbeam* being delayed, in 1860, in the Delta, although, as Laird thought, a fortunate circumstance, was disastrous to the factories higher up, but of this he never knew. As the time for the steamer's visit passed, the natives at Abo grew insolent; and when it became certain that they would not arrive, the factory was plundered. To this must be added a further misfortune: the *Rainbow* broke down early in the year, and became useless, thus cutting off all communication between the different factories. British commerce with the Niger was, for the time being, at an end, and it became the duty of Laird's executors to realise his estate by closing his factories and withdrawing all his property from the river. In July, 1861, the Admiralty ordered a gunboat to accompany the *Sunbeam* on her final visit to the factories, but, owing to a mistake on the part of the commodore, a vessel of too deep a draught to be of much service was despatched. The gunboat, however, destroyed the villages, whose inhabitants had taken part in the attack on the steamers in 1859, and then proceeded to assist in dismantling the factories,* which was effected without further disturbance, and with the result that the *Sunbeam* returned to England in the spring of 1862 with £5,000 worth of produce. Thus ended for a while England's mercantile connection with the Niger.

It may be interesting here to give some particulars concerning the grounds on which Mr. Laird based his calculations for making a profit out of Niger trade. He, of course, hoped eventually to discover new products, but for the first few years he was content to rely on such staple products as palm-oil, shea-butter, and ivory, and

* The factory at Onitsha was on the point of being plundered by the natives when the gunboat arrived on the spot;

he knew that the further from the coast he was able to trade the cheaper he could buy these commodities from the natives; thus, whereas in the Delta, a puncheon of oil fetched four and a half tons of salt, at the confluence it could be obtained for four-fifths of a ton; and the same thing applied to every other article of commerce, the main point being the matter of transport.

Of the products of the future, Laird regarded cotton as that likely to prove of most value, knowing that it was extensively cultivated in the countries north of the confluence, and fully aware of the enormous consumption of this article in England; in this, however, he was mistaken, for the country only grows sufficient to supply its own wants, and cotton has never as yet become an article of export from the Niger, though it is not by any means certain that, in this as in his other ideas, he may not eventually prove to have shown his foresight, for with a more settled state of affairs in Northern Nigeria it is probable that the cotton-producing area will extend enormously. Kano is a great cotton market, and buys up all the produce of the neighbouring countries; moreover, the natives are accomplished weavers, their cotton stuffs being greatly preferred to, and fetching a higher price than any of our Manchester goods imported into the country. This fact was either overlooked by Laird, or else he imagined that the natives would prefer imported cotton stuffs. Doubtless he was attracted by the prospect of a vast trade in cotton from what he had learned of the success in this direction of a Manchester merchant carrying on operations in the neighbourhood of Lagos (Abeokuta). This merchant (Mr. Thomas Clegg) had provided him with statistics showing the rapid growth of his trade with West Africa, and it appeared that in 1851 (when he commenced) he imported only 285 lb. of cotton; 1852, 14 bales; 1853, 37 bales; and so on until 1859, when his importations reached 3,500 bales—a bale weighing between 100 and 120 lb. But the cotton country which Laird hoped to tap differed from that surrounding Abeokuta, in that the former is inhabited principally

by Mohammedans wearing much clothing, whereas the natives of the more southern parts are (or were forty or fifty years ago) all pagans, with few requirements in the matter of dress. The failure to obtain cotton in any quantity would not, however, have altered his views as to the value of trade with the Niger; there was always a certainty of palm oil and kernels, and there were many other minor products worth exporting, while there were great hopes of discovering the less valuable minerals. All this Laird had thought out, and the world knows now that he was right in most of his calculations.

By the closing of the factories and the termination of the contract with the Admiralty resulting from Laird's death, Niger trade was thrown back several years, though in the interval which elapsed before British merchants again turned their attention to the river, much was being done by Dr. Baikie (who still remained at the confluence as Consular Agent), and by the missionaries, who had obtained a firm footing in the country near the old factories, and who continued to carry on their labours after the traders had retired. Baikie's head-quarters had originally been at the factory at Gbebe, a little below the confluence and on the opposite bank of the river to the site of the model farm of 1841; from Gbebe he removed to Odakudu, a little higher up, and then, in 1860, he crossed over to the site of the model farm, where he founded the town of Lokoja. Here, with Glover, he established a small settlement, principally of ransomed slaves, and, being on the best of terms with Masaba, Emir of Nupé, and the surrounding pagan chiefs, he gradually induced the natives to cultivate the country round the town and to settle down to peaceful pursuits, while, by learning the Hausa language and encouraging the Hausa traders to frequent Lokoja, he rapidly increased the prosperity of the place. The petty kingdom was a model of good government, and Baikie's influence was felt far and wide throughout the country, so much so that the natives spoke of him as the "King of Lokoja," and there is little doubt that the [presence of this little British

colony in the heart of Africa did more for the civilisation of the negro and for the maintenance of British prestige than it is possible to imagine.

Both Baikie and Glover, we need hardly say, were exceptional men, and though their work was confined to a very small area, they did much to smooth the way for the British traders who, a little later, came into the country. Glover lived to perform further service for his country,* but Baikie, worn out by the strain on his constitution, died on the passage to England from the Niger in 1864. The life that these men were forced to live at Lokoja is an instance of pluck and endurance in Englishmen such as is seldom met with. When the contract steamers ceased to run they were entirely cut off from the world; the nearest British settlement was Lagos, the overland journey to which took at least a fortnight, and was beset with difficulties. Their sole source of pleasure was the occasional visit of British men-of-war, but these could only navigate the river at certain seasons of the year, and the two Englishmen had frequently to subsist on native diet. The arrival of a man-of-war, and later on of a trading steamer, was the occasion for much rejoicing, and a handsome reward was always offered to the first native who brought news to the isolated little consulate of the sight of a steamer's smoke.

One is apt nowadays to imagine that the British Government, after the expedition of 1841, withdrew altogether from supporting the opening up of the Niger; this, however, is not the case, for, as we have shown, the Government contributed towards the 1854 expedition, subsidised a line of steamers in 1857, and maintained Consular Agents at Lokoja until 1868,† patrolling the

* He was Governor of Lagos; greatly distinguished himself in the Ashanti War, 1873-4; Governor of Newfoundland; Governor of the Leeward Islands. He died in 1885, aged 55. "Golobar, Father of the Hausa soldiers," is still remembered by the Yorubas. *Vide* "Life of Sir John Hawley Glover, R.N., G.C.M.G.," by Lady Glover. London, 1897.

† Dr. Baikie was succeeded by Lieutenant Bouchier, R.N.,

river at intervals with gunboats. This, it must be admitted, was much for the Government to do from disinterested motives, for, thirty or forty years ago, the idea of annexation and scrambling for African territory had not entered the heads of European politicians. The desire to stamp out slavery probably had a good deal more to do with the assistance granted by Government than the desire to develop the country for the British trader, for when it became doubtful if much good was resulting to the anti-slavery cause from a Consular agency at Lokoja, the Consuls were withdrawn for ever, and no further subsidy was granted.

The maintenance of this British consulate in the centre of Africa had conferred immense benefits on the natives of the Niger, who had begun to look on Englishmen as their superiors in every respect; even the Mohammedans, whose creed forced them to regard Christians as "Kaffirs" or unbelievers, were greatly impressed by the good work done by the white men, and the visit of H.M.S. *Investigator* and *Rattlesnake* to Lokoja in 1863 was the means of establishing a lasting friendship between Einir Masaba of Nupé and Great Britain. The principal object of the despatch of these vessels to the river was to take supplies to Dr. Baikie, but a secondary object was the conclusion of treaties of friendship with various chiefs.* At the present day these treaties may seem of some considerable importance, so it will be well to say something about them, though the idea that they were of any *political* value must not be entertained. The first

after whom the principal Consuls and Vice-Consuls at Lokoja were T. V. Robins, Paymaster Maxwell, W. Fell, J. Edwards, and Lyons McLeod, of whom Messrs. Maxwell and Fell are buried at Lokoja. From 1868 (when the last consul was withdrawn from Lokoja) until 1884 the British Government did not attempt to exercise or to lay the foundations for exercising any *political* influence whatever in Nigeria.

* "Correspondence on the Subject of an Application from the Company of African Merchants (Limited) for a Subsidy towards Establishing Steamers on the River Niger." Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 23rd June, 1864.



VILLAGE NEAR LOKOJA.

Photo : A. F. Mockler-Ferryman.

chiefs who were approached on the subject were those of Akassa, who claimed to be owners of both banks of the river at the Nun mouth. They readily signed the treaty, and promised to protect the English flag, which was immediately hoisted. Hence to the confluence all the principal chiefs agreed to form friendly alliances with Great Britain, and finally a treaty of commerce was concluded with the Emir Masaba, who sent a present of a horse to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, accompanied by a letter couched in most amicable terms.* He expressed himself as desirous of establishing regular commerce between his people and English traders, for whom he guaranteed safety within his dominions; while he volunteered to define a boundary within which British law should be administered. This was virtually the last act in which the British Government, for many years, played any part as regards the Niger, for on the withdrawal of the Consuls from Lokoja, thirty odd years ago, the river passed into the hands of traders, in whose hands for all intents and purposes it, until the 1st January, 1900, remained, and it is the chronicle of this trading epoch with which we are now concerned.

While Baikie and the native members of the Church Missionary Society were busying themselves in Africa, a movement was being set on foot in England to re-establish commercial relations with the Niger tribes, and to continue the great work begun by Laird. In this were associated certain gentlemen well acquainted with West African trade and several of Mr. Laird's friends and relations, amongst whom may be mentioned more particularly Archibald Hamilton.† Experience had shown that what was required to develop the Niger trade was

* As none of these treaties conferred any political rights on Great Britain, the chiefs could, at the same time or subsequently, have entered into similar treaties with any other nation.

† Mr. A. Hamilton delivered, at the Bromley Literary Institute, on the 25th March, 1862, a most interesting lecture on "The River Niger, and the Progress of Discovery and Commerce in Central Africa."

capital, and it was therefore necessary to follow in the footsteps of Laird and endeavour to form a joint stock company, assisted by Government. The first proposed company was "The River Niger Navigation and Trading Company," with a capital of £100,000 in 20,000 £5 shares. Then followed the "Company of African Merchants"* (with a capital of £400,000, £300,000 of which was subscribed by the founders), who, in 1864, addressed Lord Palmerston on the subject of obtaining a subsidy from the Government. The correspondence relating to the subsidy was published as a Parliamentary paper, and throws a certain amount of light on the jealousies which even then were shown by the Coast merchants towards the establishment of a new trading company. The Company applied for a subsidy such as was granted to Mr. Laird, and backed up its application by a statement of the good results which were likely to accrue from establishing regular steam communication on the Niger. Moreover, the African Aid Society exerted itself to impress on the Government the necessity of maintaining commercial relations with the natives of the river. The Lords of the Treasury, however, refused to entertain the application, affirming that too much public money had already been expended on this object. This refusal was met by a second application from the Company, whose chairman concluded his letter in the following words: "If the hopes, so repeatedly held out to the natives, be not shortly realised by the permanent British mercantile occupation of the country, the Niger districts will either fall into the hands of some other nation, or a deeper gloom than ever will close over Central Africa." On this, Lord John Russell, in spite of numerous memorials from individual trading firms, decided to recommend the grant of a subsidy to the Company.

This question of a subsidy is somewhat interesting,

* The following were appointed directors of the Company: William Dent, Esq., Archibald Hamilton, Esq., A. Castellain, Esq., L. Gruning, Esq., L. Langworthy, Esq., R. Rumney, Esq., and J. Aspinall Tobin, Esq. (Managing Director):

especially when we glance at the pros and cons put forward by the various parties concerned. The Company of African Merchants based their appeal chiefly on philanthropic grounds: "To afford the advantages of legitimate commerce to the natives, thereby striking a blow at the slave trade at its source in these regions, and to afford facilities for missionary enterprise in Central Africa, such as have never before existed"; while, to show that they did not desire to misappropriate the subsidy, they offered to keep separate accounts of the trading operations, and to reimburse the subsidy with interest should the trade profits exceed six per cent. The objection on the part of the Government was that to subsidise one particular company would tend to create a monopoly to the exclusion of other British merchants who might desire to take advantage of what Government had already done and trade in the Niger; but this objection, even after considering the memorials of the West Coast merchants, Lord John Russell modified, giving it as his opinion that "the interests of a few private individuals ought to give way to the public good." The principal opposers of the subsidy were the Anglo-African Company,* the African Merchants of Bristol,† and the Merchants of London‡ and Liverpool,§ trading to the West Coast of Africa, all of whom presented memorials to Her Majesty's Government, expressing their "surprise and alarm" at the idea of a company being subsidised to the detriment of private traders. Reading between the lines, it is very evident that this virtuous indignation was nothing more nor less than jealousy, and even to most recent times history has been repeating itself—as witness

* *Chairman*, S. Isaac; *Secretary*, H. C. Aldis.

† Messrs. R. W. King, Lucas, Gurger, F. Burford, T. Redway, P. E. V. Clarke, T. Wood, G. Cole.

‡ Messrs. Forster and Smith, Banner Brothers & Co., W. Griffith, W. A. Parker & Co., W. W. Blobitt, T. Morgan & Sons, Ford, Fenn, Swan & Co.

§ Thomas Harrison & Co., Hatton & Cookson, Tyson, Richmond and Jones, Grant, Murdock & Co., David Clark, Alfred Aspinall, Chas. Horsfall & Sons, Stuart & Douglas, G. J. Cornish.

the outcry of African merchants when a charter was granted to the Royal Niger Company.

The "Company of African Merchants" never commenced operations as such, but by 1865 a desultory form of trade had been started, in which the old coast merchants endeavoured to take the opportunity of extending their businesses inland, by despatching small steamers up the Niger with goods likely to attract the natives. These remained in the river until their cargoes were bartered for ivory and such other commodities as had a saleable value in England. The competition among the various British traders soon became tremendous, each attempting to outbid his fellow, until the natives were complete masters of the situation. They got an erroneous idea of the value of their products, and eventually refused to deal for anything but spirits and guns, so that it seemed as if the opening up of the country to trade was likely to prove anything but an advantage to the civilisation of the people. "If this erroneous policy is pursued," wrote McQueen, "then to the latest period of time the central and southern parts of that vast continent are doomed to remain in the same deplorable state of ignorance, degradation, and misery which has been their lot during the lapse of three hundred years."

This deadlock continued for some time, and it is very doubtful if these independent trading concerns—mere roving ventures as they were—were a benefit either to the natives or to the eventual development of commerce. Their sole object was to make money, and they sold arms and ammunition freely, thus giving the people the means for carrying on their interminable tribal wars. It was not long, however, before a better class of trading enterprise was initiated, and among the first important firms may be mentioned the West African Company (of Manchester), Alexander Miller Bros., Mr. James Pinnock, and the Central African Company of London. These firms soon came to the conclusion that they were cutting each other's throats, and so, in 1879, they decided to amalgamate. The United Africa Company, as they

called themselves, speedily altered the tone of affairs ; trading stations were erected on land, and business commenced in earnest. The prime mover in all this was Mr. Goldie Taubman* (now Sir George Taubman Goldie), who first visited the Niger in 1877. Mr. Goldie Taubman was much interested in African exploration, and, having already travelled in the Upper Nile regions, decided to attempt to ascend the Benué river and strike across the continent to the valley of the Upper Nile. For this purpose he ordered a steam launch (the *Benué*, 90 feet in length) to be built by Yarrow and sent out in pieces, and, in company with his brother—Captain Goldie Taubman, 63rd Regiment—he started for the Niger. Here the launch was put together in a dry dock cut in the bank of the river, but owing to the serious illness of Captain Goldie Taubman, the project of crossing Africa had to be abandoned.

It was at this time that Mr. Goldie Taubman (who had some slight interest in the Central African Company) became impressed with the value of the Niger regions to Great Britain, but he at once saw that no headway was likely to be made unless radical reforms were introduced and competition among the British traders put an end to. To him, therefore, was mainly due the amalgamation of the various firms, and, as we shall see when discussing the great company of which he afterwards became Governor, his foresight and vast abilities were instrumental in adding to the British possessions in Africa an extensive and valuable tract of country. But the National African Company (formerly the United Africa Company), powerful as it had become by 1882, had no power to monopolise the Niger, and it was not long before the French, ever jealous of British success, turned their attentions to this quarter of Africa, establishing on the Lower Niger two commercial associations, viz. the *Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Equatoriale*† and the *Compagnie du Senegal et de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique*.‡

* Formerly an officer in the Royal Engineers.

† Capital, £160,000.

‡ Capital, £600,000.

This phase in Niger history is a very important one, for there can be little doubt that these French firms were more or less State-aided, and Gambetta was known to be secretly encouraging an enterprise which might result in France adding to her Colonial Empire the lower portion of the river, as she had already done the upper portion.* Fortunately for Great Britain the matter never became a question for international discussion; otherwise, in all probability, our Continental neighbours would now be in complete possession of British Nigeria. The National African Company, having discovered that the foreign interlopers could be bought out, at once decided to raise the necessary money, and, with this view, as well as to be able to obtain a charter from the Government, the capital of the Company was increased from £125,000 to £1,000,000, and the public were invited to subscribe, the result of which was that the French firms, after a little resistance, were in October, 1884, given a sum of money and a certain number of shares in the Company to leave the river.† Had they been able to foresee subsequent events, they would, doubtless, have refused to accept the bribe offered by “perfidious Albion.” As it was, their retirement destroyed for ever all French claims, though a year or more elapsed before the British Government decided on taking the only course which could prevent further foreign intrusion into regions which had been discovered, explored, and developed by none others than Englishmen.

* *Vide* Chapter XIII.

† The two French companies had established some thirty trading stations on the banks of the river.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY, CHARTERED AND LIMITED.

The National African Company—It receives the Royal Charter July, 1886—The Pros and Cons of Chartered Company Government—Different kinds of Chartered Companies—The Organisation of the Royal Niger Company—The work it had to do—The Expedition against the Emir of Nupé—A Brilliant Campaign—The Ilorin Expedition—The Company as Trader.

THE British Government, cognisant of the fact that the National African Company was exerting itself in earnest, decided to give it a measure of support, and with this view, Consul Hewett (H.B.M.'s Consul for the Oil Rivers and neighbourhood) was instructed to undertake in 1884 a treaty-making tour throughout the Niger Districts, when he succeeded in concluding treaties with numerous native chiefs, who readily placed themselves under British protection. [Early in 1885 an agreement was entered into with Germany as to the spheres of influence of Great Britain and Germany in this part of Africa, resulting in the insertion, in the *London Gazette* of the 5th June of the same year, of a notification to the effect that a British Protectorate had been established over the Niger Districts. The territories comprised within the Protectorate were defined to be "The line of coast between the British Protectorate of Lagos, and the right or western bank of the mouth of the Rio del Rey; and also the territories on both banks of the Niger, from its confluence with the River Benué at Lokoja to the sea, as well as the territories on both banks of the River Benué, from the confluence up to and including Ibi."

The National African Company had already, as we have seen, made great strides in developing trade, and had acquired extensive rights from the native chiefs,

but that part of the Protectorate in which the Company traded had so far no recognised form of administration, and as a simple trading concern the Company had no ability, without the sanction of Great Britain, to receive from the natives "sovereign rights," concessions which would affect the subjects of any other European power. Two courses lay open to the British Government, if it intended to retain the Protectorate, viz. direct administration (either under the Foreign Office or the Colonial Office), or government by charter. As early as 1881 the National African Company had endeavoured to obtain a charter, but it was refused, chiefly on the grounds that the Company was too small to be entrusted with such responsibilities. This difficulty was overcome in 1882 by the capital of the Company being raised to £1,000,000,* but there was still another difficulty—the presence of the French firms on the Lower Niger. At length the way was made clear, and the National African Company received its royal charter in July, 1886, when a little later in the same year it adopted the more appropriate name which heads the present chapter

The British Government had thus, by delegating its authority to the Company, evaded the inauguration of an enormous and costly system of administration over regions about which little or nothing was known. It would be out of place here to discuss whether this step was wisely taken, though the matter of government by chartered companies is one frequently, nowadays, before the public, and therefore a plain statement of certain facts in connection with the subject will, at any rate, help the reader to form his own opinions, or possibly to modify them one way or another. But first it will be well to point out that the Royal Niger Company differed in two particulars from the now-existing British Chartered Companies (viz. the British North Borneo Company and the British South African Company), in that it both

* The first Governor and Chairman of the Company was the Right Honourable Lord Aberdare, at that time President of the Royal Geographical Society.

traded and administered, whereas the others devote all their attention to administration ; and that the Niger Company had to depend for its dividend entirely on trade profits, while the others pay their dividends out of revenue derived from taxation in one form or another. Laying aside for a moment the peculiar situation of the Niger Company, and dealing with chartered company government in its wide sense, we find that the arguments put forward by the supporters and opponents of the system are sufficiently weighty to fill a volume ; all, then, that we can hope to do is to enumerate, without expressing an opinion one way or another, the main points on both sides. The advantages claimed for the system* are that there is no better method for the early development of a country ; a company will always go ahead quicker than direct Imperial Government, as it is not tied down by the formality of having all its acts sanctioned by superior authority ; if the company blunders, the British Government can shift the responsibility ; and, to quote the *Scotsman*, "Chartered Companies in Africa, as elsewhere, have been the best pioneers of British commerce and authority." The opponents of the system maintain that it lays Great Britain open to being seriously embroiled with adjacent European nations ; that the exercise of a charter tends to over-taxation, and therefore checks rather than encourages trade ; and that it is a mean device of a Government to shirk responsibility, which, if not capable of undertaking, it should leave alone. With regard to a company such as forms the subject of this chapter, the chief arguments against a charter are that it enables the company to hold almost a monopoly of trade ; that, although this monopoly is actually forbidden by the charter, it is against human nature not to use the administrative power so as to benefit the company in the matter of trade, to the detriment of all competitors.

* The most ardent supporters of chartered company government only consider it a temporary measure, to be superseded eventually by direct Government administration.

The granting of charters to companies is not, as is sometimes supposed, an innovation. Elsewhere in West Africa British chartered companies were, in early times, by no means uncommon, though in their case the charters were almost solely for purposes of trade. The Government granted subsidies for maintaining the forts on the coast, but there was no question of governing the country or of acquiring territory, the ground on which the forts stood being rented from the natives. In India and Canada things were different, the East India Company and the Hudson Bay Company holding positions very similar to that held by the Royal Niger Company, but the territories which they governed were not under the protection of Great Britain. To sum up: the situation of the Royal Niger Company (then the National African Company) on receiving its charter in 1886 was as follows: It being the sole representative of European traders in that part of the British Niger Protectorate, was authorised by its charter to continue to carry on the various objects enumerated in its Memorandum of Association, including the power to govern, keep in order, and protect any territories of native chiefs with whom it had concluded "sovereign rights" treaties. By the numerous provisos contained in the charter, the Secretary of State retained the power of veto over any of the Company's acts; the Company to remain British in character and domicile, not to transfer any of its benefits without sanction, to discourage and gradually abolish slavery, to tolerate the religion of the natives, uphold their ancient laws and customs (except in the interests of humanity), treat the natives with justice, to afford facilities for British ships in its harbours, etc. etc. Furthermore, the Company was authorised to acquire lawfully and hold new territories, and to fly a British flag bearing its own particular device.* It was prohibited from setting up or granting any

* The Company's flag was a white ensign, bearing in the right hand upper corner a circle, within which was a Y-shaped figure (representing the courses of the Lower Niger, the Middle Niger, and the Benué), with the words, "Ars, Jus, and Pax."

monopoly of trade ; but, while allowing free access to all traders to markets in its territories, was permitted to levy custom duties, etc.,* to an extent sufficient to defray the cost of government, administration of justice, maintenance of order, and the performance of treaty obligations, and it was granted full jurisdiction, in the interests of commerce and order, over all foreigners and British subjects in its territories. Lastly, the Crown reserved the right to revoke the charter at any time that it should think fit.

The above are, in brief, the conditions under which the Chartered Company of the Niger commenced operations. It had already concluded some 250 treaties with various independent chiefs, and it immediately set to work to organise a thorough system of administration. That this was no light task must be patent to everyone who is acquainted with the vast extent of the Company's territories and the varied character of the natives. Before giving the reader a general idea of the working of a great company of this kind, it may be well to say of what the Company's territories consisted at the time that the charter was granted, or, in other words, what rights had been acquired by treaties with the natives. Its coast-line extended from the Forcados river to the Nun mouth of the Niger ; it possessed treaty rights over both banks of the Lower Niger, with its affluents and branches, for a distance of about ten hours' journey inland ; over the whole of the Sokoto and Gando empires, and over all the various independent pagan countries on the Benué up to a distance by water of almost 1,000 miles from the sea. In some essential particulars the treaties then in existence differed ; for instance, "sovereign rights" clauses were not always inserted, though in all cases the Company was given the sole right to trade and mine in the country, and the native rulers agreed to have no intercourse with any foreigners except with the sanction

* Accounts and particulars to be furnished whenever required by the Secretary of State.

of the Company. In return for the acquisition of these various rights, annual subsidies were to be paid to each treaty-making chief, in proportion to the size and importance of his kingdom, ranging from £2,000 to a few shillings.

Now as to the organisation of the Company. The chief office was established in London. Lord Aberdare was appointed Governor, and Mr. Goldie Taubman (now Sir G. Goldie) Deputy-Governor, the Board of Directors consisting of numerous well-known West African traders and others; while in the Niger itself affairs were managed by an Agent-General (Mr. David McIntosh)* and an efficient staff. As far as trade was concerned, the Company was already firmly established in the country, with several flourishing trading stations and a fleet of river steamers. Its first important duty, therefore, was to arrange the details for putting in order the good government of the country. A force of Hausa Constabulary was immediately raised, equipped, and officered by Europeans; a body of police was formed and distributed in detachments throughout the territories; senior executive officers, district agents, with assistants and native political agents, were appointed; and a High Court, presided over by a Chief Justice, was established at Asaba, on the Lower Niger, which became and remained the administrative headquarters of the Company.† As sanctioned by the charter a system of taxation (duties on imports and exports, and licences) was arranged to provide a revenue to cover the cost of administration, and for its collection custom-house officials were placed in charge of the different stations named in the proclamation as "ports of entry."

A more thorough organisation it would be almost impossible to devise, and the fact that (with a few trivial exceptions) it withstood the test of time is proof that the Company while it held its charter did not betray the trust

* Succeeded by Mr. Joseph Flint and Mr. William Wallace.

† The headquarters of the Constabulary were at Asaba until 1889, when they were transferred to Lokoja, with a strong detachment at Ibi, on the Benué.

that the Government of 1886 placed in it. Neither were its actions concealed during this decade or more of its life, for even its most private concerns were freely criticised in the public press; it passed through the ordeal of a searching inquiry by a Government Commissioner, who personally inspected every establishment in the Company's territories; and its treaty rights on several occasions became the subject of international discussion; while the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs continuously investigated everything connected with the Company. The chief point to be remembered, but so often forgotten by Englishmen anxious to find fault, is that the Royal Niger Company, whatever may have been its methods, did great and good work for the British Empire by developing new markets in an enormous tract of valuable country, and by preparing the way for direct Imperial control. It was instrumental in adding to the possessions of Great Britain more than 350,000 square miles of territory, which when recently handed over to the Government was found to be in as good order as the hinterland of any West Coast Colony.

To go back, however, to the commencement of the Chartered Company's existence. No sooner did it find itself acting in the dual capacity of trader and sovereign than its work began in earnest. Difficulties had to be faced on all sides, and from quarters least expected; not only did petty troubles arise with turbulent native tribes, but German and French free-lances stepped in and endeavoured (but unsuccessfully, be it said) to undermine the foundations of the structure that the Company was carefully raising. But of these international questions we shall at present say nothing, for they are of too great importance to be dismissed in a few words, though we may remark that the Government kept pace with the Company by concluding agreements with France and Germany at different times, and by notifying in the *London Gazette* of the 18th October, 1887, the extension of the British Protectorate over "all territories in the basin of the Niger and its affluents which were, or might be for the time

being, subject to the government of the Royal Niger Company."

The minor troubles were, of course, fully expected, for it was unlikely that a people, in many cases without a vestige of civilisation, would submit to the new order of things without some show of resistance. Many of their customs were such as no civilised Government could permit; it was impossible for the officials to close their eyes to such inhuman barbarities as cannibalism, human sacrifices, murder of twins, and the open sale of slaves, all of which were indulged in by one or other of the Delta tribes. These matters were consequently each and all taken in hand, at first by using persuasion, and then, when that failed, by force of arms.* Later, there came small expeditions for punishing tribes for acts of piracy, plunder, and the like; but, considering the extent of the territories, the amount of force that it was necessary to use was remarkably small. While the lessons were being dealt out to the natives—they had in every instance a most salutary effect on neighbouring tribes—the Company's agents devoted their time to improving the relations existing between themselves and the various chiefs, more especially the great Mohammedan potentates of the Fulah Empire. From year to year new treaties were made, each one gaining some new concession for the Company, until eventually the whole of the territories included in this particular British sphere of influence virtually passed into the hands of the Company. To bring this Mohammedan country within its direct jurisdiction was an undertaking at which the Company only latterly arrived; previously all its energies had to be expended in reducing to order the pagan tribes of the Delta and the Benué; but, having as far as possible abolished the ancient savage rites of the heathens, it became its duty to put a check on the slave-raiding propensities of the Mohammedans, and in 1897 the first step in this direction was taken.

* An account of the suppression of human sacrifices at Asaba will be found in "Up the Niger," page 28.

Relations with the Emir of Nupé had become strained ; he and his predecessor, Maleké, had neglected to carry out the terms of their treaty, had checked trade, oppressed the pagan inhabitants of their kingdom, encouraged their Fulah subjects in slave-raiding, and had become insolent in their bearing towards both the officials of the Company and their suzerain of Gando. By the end of 1896 matters had arrived at such a pitch that, if the prestige of the Company was to be maintained, immediate action was necessary. It became a question whether the forces at the disposal of the Company were sufficient to attack a Mohammedan state bordering on a vast Mohammedan empire, with the risk of rousing the fanaticism of their co-religionists. Defeat to the Company would entail the undoing of the work of years, expulsion from two-thirds of its territories, and, in fact, absolute ruin ; success would bring with it an increase in power almost impossible to estimate, relief to millions of oppressed people, and immense commercial advantages. Perhaps no better example than this can be put forward of the benefit to Great Britain of chartered company government : here was at stake a whole empire ; the strongest of colonial governors would have refused under the circumstances to have embarked on such an undertaking without Imperial troops ; but the Royal Niger Company decided to run the risk, and, to use a popular expression, “ take the bull by the horns,” or perish in the attempt. The result is worthy of being told at some length.

The expedition thus launched in January, 1897, was the largest and most important of any ever organised by the Company, and when the campaign commenced it was thought in England that there was something of rashness in attempting with a small body of Hausas to engage the vast hordes of fighting Fulahs capable of being put in the field by the Emir of Nupé. To overthrow the Fulahs of Nupé was the primary object of the expedition, though, after this had been accomplished, attention was turned to the neighbouring State of Ilorin. The force at the command of the Company consisted of about 550

Hausa constabulary,* with thirty-two British officers and non-commissioned officers, two Whitworth guns, five seven-pounder mountain guns, and six Maxims, while for the important duty of patrolling the river separating Northern from Southern Nupé about a dozen stern-wheel steamers and launches were available. To understand the operations it is necessary to know something of the situation of the Nupé kingdom and more especially that the Emir's capital lies in Northern Nupé, while the country to the south of the Middle Niger was the great slaving-ground of the Fulahs. Lokoja (at the confluence) was selected as the starting point, and it being known that the greater part of the Nupé army under the Makum was on the war-path near Kabba, about fifty miles due west of Lokoja, it was proposed to at once attack their camp and endeavour to cut off their retreat across the Niger; while to complete the success of this plan the Company's fleet† was despatched to watch the crossings above Egga. The little column‡ left Lokoja on the 6th January, and marched on Sura, a few miles north of Kabba, so as to intervene between the enemy and his base, and thus force him to fight. On the 11th Sura was reached and a permanent camp established; one company was despatched north to open up communications with Egga, as the column had moved from Lokoja *en air*; and 400 men were formed into a flying column to attack the Makum's force. News now arrived that the war camp had been broken up, and that the army was in full retreat towards the west; it being considered hopeless to attempt to overtake the enemy, the Hausas, after hoisting the British flag in Kabba and burning the adjacent war camp, returned to Sura on the 14th. From

* About sixty per cent. pure Hausas; thirty per cent. Yorubas; ten per cent. other tribes. The total strength of the Company's Constabulary was about 1,000, but the garrisons on the Benué and Lower Niger could not be withdrawn during the operations.

† Under the command of Mr. William Wallace.

‡ Sir George Goldie accompanied the expedition, the military command being given to Major Arnold, 3rd Hussars.

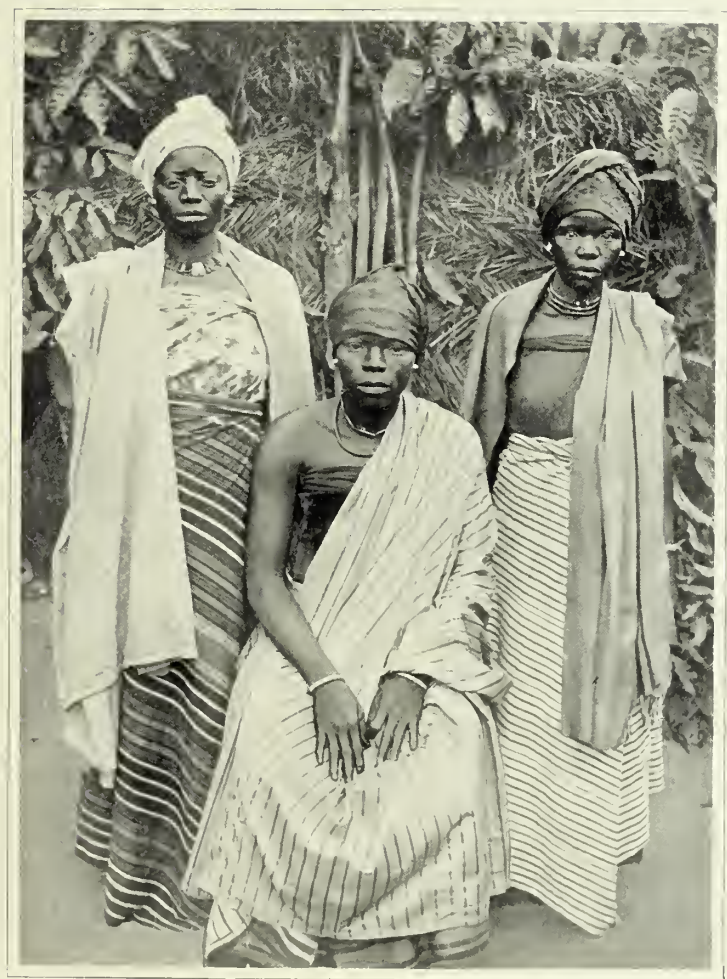


Photo : Major Eden.

NUPE WOMEN.

that place a movement was made on Egbon in a direct line to Bida, and, on reaching the river on the 22nd, it was learned that the Fulah army was in a demoralised state and scattered in the villages west of Egbon.

In the meanwhile the Lokoja garrison had proceeded up the river with the fleet, so as to join the Kabba column in the attack on Bida, and hearing that the enemy had reached Ladi (the old southern capital), the officer in command immediately attacked the town, which was captured and destroyed the day before the main column reached the river at Egbon. The excellent work done by Mr. Wallace* and his fleet while the Kabba force was in the interior had everything to say to the thorough success of the campaign. The river was divided into six sections for patrol work, and every part of it from Lokoja to Jebba was carefully watched; moreover, by preaching an Anti-Fulah crusade among the oppressed waterside Ganaga tribes, Wallace secured their co-operation and the use of an unlimited supply of canoes. In this way Northern Nupé was entirely cut off from the country to the south of the river, and the Makum, with the remnant of his force, was prevented from retreating on Bida.

Although somewhat disappointed at not having succeeded in inducing the Commander-in-Chief to give battle, Sir George Goldie was more than satisfied with the turn of affairs, and being aware that the Emir had formed alliances with neighbouring Fulah States,† and meant to defend Bida at all costs, he at once decided to advance on the capital. The boldness of this stroke will be appreciated when it is known that the Fulah army mustered 30,000 fighting men, a third of whom were mounted, and a proportion of the infantry armed with modern rifles; while the British force numbered barely 600. With the latter, however, were two Whitworth‡ and five 7-pounder

* For this Mr. Wallace was created a C.M.G.

† Lapai, Argai, and others.

‡ A 9-pounder and a 12-pounder.

guns,* as well as six machine guns,† and the Hausas were thoroughly disciplined and commanded by British officers. The advance commenced without delay; a reconnoitring party crossed the river from Egbon on the 23rd January, followed by the main body on the following day. On the 25th the advanced guard drove in the enemy's scouts, and camp was formed at Lokitsha. Thence to Bida was a distance of about fifteen miles, and soon after commencing the march on the 26th the head of the column came in touch with the enemy, who retired when fired on. No serious resistance was shown until the advanced guard reached a point within about five miles of the walls of the capital, when, on taking possession of a ridge evacuated by the enemy, they found themselves in sight of Bida and the whole Fulah army. Owing to the nature of the country, the column had been obliged to move with a very narrow front, its whole length (from advanced guard to rear guard) extending over a distance of seven miles; it was thus some considerable time before the troops could be formed up for attack. But the intention had not been to attack until the following day, it having been hoped to be able to drive back the enemy behind the walls of the town, and to encamp in a ravine at a distance of about three miles from them. This was eventually done, but not without trouble. While the column was filing into camp, the enemy's cavalry commenced to threaten the flanks and rear, and it was necessary to close up and advance in square; the Fulah cavalry now made repeated charges on all sides, but were utterly nonplussed by the galling fire from the Maxims, so that they gradually drew off to the town. Meanwhile, the Whitworth guns were still in rear, one of the 7-pounders had been lost, and Lieutenant Thomson had been cut off by the enemy and killed. The withdrawal of the enemy's cavalry was followed by the advance of their infantry sharpshooters, who took up positions well under cover, and commenced to harass the little British force now established in camp.

* Rifled muzzle-loaders.

† '45; the men were armed with Sniders ('577).

Without the Whitworth guns, whose safety was beginning to be a matter of serious consideration, it would have been almost useless attempting the capture of Bida ; consequently, two companies were sent back to bring them up, which they were successful in doing, though not until late in the evening. The 9-pounder arrived before sunset, and having been brought into action, did immense execution, its second shell landing in the midst of the allies' staff and killing the principal war-chief, from which resulted the desertion in the night of the whole of the Lapai and Argai (or Argeye) contingents. The 12-pounder reached camp after dark, and during the night a few shells and rockets were dropped into Bida.

At daybreak on the 27th the enemy's scouts were found to be advancing ; camp was struck, and the whole force moved slowly forward in square formation. For some little distance nothing occurred ; then, on reaching the crest of a low ridge, the Fulah cavalry commenced their tactics of the previous day ; in a few moments the square was enveloped, and charge succeeded charge, though without once penetrating the square ; Maxim and rifle kept up an incessant fire, and the artillery played on the masses of the enemy forming up outside the walls of the town. The Emir himself was in command, and knowing full well what defeat would entail, meant resisting to the bitter end, but a well-directed shell bursting within a few feet of him, scattered his staff, and a general retirement took place.* The Whitworth guns now bombarded the town, and two companies advanced to fire the buildings with rockets. This was too much for the warriors, who forthwith abandoned the town and took to the open plains beyond, where they suffered considerably at the hands of the artillery until they had got beyond range. "Bida is ours," briefly telegraphed Sir George Goldie, after the British flag had been hoisted over the Emir's palace, and probably no more important message has ever been transmitted to England by the West Coast cable. The

* The Emir was slightly wounded on this occasion.

fall of Bida implied not only the conquest of the kingdom of Nupé and the death-blow to slave raiding in this part of Africa, but also the permanent establishment of British power in one of the most important States of the great Fulah Empire, an event which in a few weeks became known to every Mohammedan from Timbuctoo to Lake Chad.

It was a matter of doubt for a few days whether the Makum and his men would not retreat to Ilorin and seek the assistance of the Fulahs of that State to recover Nupé; the fortunate capture of his younger brother, however, enabled negotiations to be opened up with the Makum Muhammed, who, having given in his submission, was forthwith proclaimed Emir of Northern Nupé, but a vassal of the Royal Niger Company. Southern Nupé was at the same time declared to be a free country, under the protection of the Company, within which the legal *status* of slavery was for ever abolished.

This brilliant and decisive campaign had occupied a month, but there was still work to be done by the gallant little force. Sir George Goldie desired to visit the Emir of Ilorin, on a friendly mission, to settle certain matters connected with the Lagos boundary, and, having fears for the good faith of the Ilorin war party, he considered it advisable to take with him an armed escort, consisting of 300 men, two 7-pounders, and four Maxims. The expedition assembled at Jebba on the 8th February, and two days later, letters having in the meantime been sent to Emir Suliman informing him of the friendly nature of the Governor's visit, marched south. On the 12th the Orere river was crossed, and on the 14th the Areba river; so far there had been no sign of opposition. That evening it was accidentally discovered that the Baloguns, or war-chiefs, intended to offer resistance to the advance, and, when the column started next morning, every precaution was taken against surprise. By 8.30 a.m. it became evident that the Ilorin army was on the move, and shortly afterwards, when the Oyo river was being approached, the threatening attitude of the enemy's cavalry necessitated the rapid formation of the Hausas into a

fighting square. This had hardly been effected than bodies of horsemen charged simultaneously on all sides; the Maxims and Sniders were kept hard at work, and in a very few minutes the deadly hail had driven the survivors of the charges to a safe distance. The square then advanced across the Oyo and encamped for the night within a few miles of the city. It was fully expected that the enemy would attack under cover of darkness, but, although their piquet-fires disclosed the fact that they were in positions almost surrounding the camp, nothing occurred to disturb the rest of the troops. At dawn on the 16th the little force paraded, and advanced in square formation towards the Asa River (flowing under the walls of the city), where 8,000 or 10,000 of the enemy were seen waiting to dispute the passage. The guns and Maxims having been brought into action, the square reached the river-bank without halting, and the Fulah force broke up and retired within the city. Nothing now remained but to shell the place, and by 4 p.m. the effect of the artillery fire had been successful in clearing the town, when it was occupied without further opposition.

Compared with the two days' fighting at Bida, the resistance offered by the Ilorins was insignificant, which may be partly accounted for by knowing that a division of the army had only a few days previously been thoroughly beaten by the Lagos Constabulary on the southern borders of the kingdom, and that the Emir (who desired peace) did not support his Baloguns in opposing the advance of the Company's force. The results of this expedition were as complete and satisfactory as could have been desired; Emir Suliman was reinstated, on signing a treaty by which he placed himself "entirely under the protection and power of the Company"; slave-raiding and the introduction of gin and rum into the country were forbidden, and all slaves who desired freedom were released. Thus in fifty-one days* the Company had completely

* The total casualties of the campaign were one officer and seven men killed, one officer and twelve men wounded. The cost of the campaign was £25,000.

subjugated two important Mohammedan kingdoms, introduced a new system of administration, delivered from oppression and tyranny the vast pagan population, and, by a formal proclamation, abolished for ever the *status* of slavery in the regions south of the Middle Niger.

"There can be now no question," said the *Times*, in describing the events of the campaign, "that military resistance in that portion of the Company's territories which lies to the south and west of the river Niger is at an end. The reign of terror maintained by the slave-raiding powers since we have had any acquaintance with the country is over, and a vast district has thus been thrown open to the operations of peaceful trade. It is perhaps too soon to attempt to estimate fully the far-reaching effects of this campaign. They can only be realised by degrees. The wise moderation with which victory has been used offers the best guarantee of the durability of its results. The issue was one in which the existence of the Company and the maintenance of Imperial authority over a great region in the most populous portion of West Africa were at stake. Had the operations been less carefully planned, and less gallantly executed, the nation which takes success with habitual indifference might have had to choose between the alternative of a big West African war or the partition by France and Germany of a very valuable British sphere of influence. Sir George Goldie, by whose efforts the territory was in the first instance secured for this country, has shown himself able to keep it not only by diplomacy but also in the field. Its development will henceforth become a recognised object of national interest."

Turning now to the commercial operations of the Company, we find that its career was no less remarkable as trader than as sovereign, and a steady dividend averaging $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum was paid to the shareholders.* We have traced the development of Niger trade from its commencement down to the disappearance of French

* 1892, $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

competition, and the subsequent establishment of the Royal Niger Company as the sole representative of European traders in this part of Africa. It now remains to give a brief account of the Company's method of conducting business in the Niger, of the products and prospects of its territories, and of the advantages that have accrued to Great Britain by the successful completion of the work begun by Macgregor Laird. Trade with the natives was (and is) carried on at a series of factories or trading stations erected on the banks of the river, the more important ones in charge of Europeans, and the smaller ones presided over by coloured agents, principally from Sierra Leone. Of these factories the Royal Niger Company possessed about forty, grouped into districts, and so situated as to command the trade of the surrounding tribes. The main *dépôt* was at Akassa, a few miles within the Nun mouth, and accessible to ocean-going steamers, but has now been removed to Burutu. Stern-wheel steamers and launches plied between Akassa and the various factories, conveying up European goods and bringing down the native produce. This went on all the year round, though the heaviest part of the work was necessarily carried on in the rainy season, when the rivers are everywhere navigable; for, some of the tributaries of the Lower Niger and the whole of the Benué can only, for six or eight months of the year, be navigated by launches of the lightest draught. These methods still continue, for, although the Company has surrendered its charter, it carries on its trading operations as heretofore, retaining its old factories, agents, etc.

There is little difference in appearance between one trading-station and another, the number of corrugated iron store sheds alone denoting the importance of the place, since, as a rule, the native town, or collection of villages, cannot be seen from the river. The agent requires to be something more than a shop-keeper, as nearly all sales and purchases are transacted on the barter system, which, however, is much simplified by using a "head" of cowries (value fixed as 1s. 3d.) as the base. The price to be paid for native produce is fixed for the district from

time to time; thus, supposing that a native brings in five shillings' worth of palm-oil, the agent allows him to select Manchester goods, salt, or whatever he wants, to the value of four "heads" of cowries, the value of all the articles on sale in the store of course being fixed in English money. To the uninitiated it is a roundabout way of doing business, but there being practically no money currency* in the country, there is no more convenient method of trading, and in some respects it has its advantages. But the intricacies of business do not end here, since the native is most capricious in his tastes, and whereas at one time his heart will be set on a particular pattern cloth, at others he will take nothing but salt, or perhaps cowries, so that it is by no means an easy matter for the agent to know with what article to stock his store. The local market rate of cowries also requires as careful daily attention as the rate of silver on the Bombay Stock Exchange. All this is very different to the original manner of trading in the Niger, when a steamer loaded with English goods went up the river, and stayed there until everything had been exchanged with the natives; in those days a native laid his produce on the deck, and the English trader put down by its side a piece of cloth worth perhaps a hundredth part of its value, and then, if the native appeared discontented, added a clasp-knife or a string of beads or two until the bargain was concluded.

Year by year new factories have been opened, and new products brought to light, though, even now, two-thirds of the great store of wealth of these regions remain locked up. Trade has so far, by force of circumstances, been confined to the neighbourhood of the waterways, but as time goes on we shall doubtless find the Company's and other traders' factories established inland, and taking the place of the travelling Hausa merchants. The chief exports from the Niger are, like those of the rest of West

* A money currency is gradually being introduced. The West African Frontier Force is paid in English money, which is rapidly getting into circulation. *Vide* Chapter XV:

Africa, palm-oil and rubber, though there is here a much greater variety of other products,* amongst which may be mentioned ivory, shea butter, *adansonia* fibre, potash, hides, tin, gum, and various oil seeds. The palm oil comes almost entirely from the districts of the Lower Niger, shea butter from the Middle Niger, while the Benué produces such things as ivory, gum, and rubber. In exchange for these articles are given all sorts and kinds of European commodities: Manchester goods, Birmingham wares, tobacco, salt, and an infinity of odds and ends, while in the Delta regions spirits, gunpowder, and "Long Dane" and other "trade" muskets are still admitted.

With regard to the sale of these latter articles, some explanation is necessary; for the mere mention of such demoralising things will at once attract the attention of the philanthropic Englishman. The extent to which the whole of the West Coast of Africa has been flooded with spirits ever since trade was established with that part of the world is well known to everyone, and it is only within the last few years that any attempt has been made to put a check on the enormous imports of this deleterious commodity. As in the case of the abolition of the slave-trade, England took the first step in the matter, and endeavoured, at the Berlin Conference in 1884, to impress on the Powers the importance of putting some restraint on the spirit traffic. It is noteworthy that Sir George Goldie, who represented the Niger Company at the Conference, was the prime mover in this liquor question, though nothing came of his suggestions until the Brussels Conference in 1890. Meanwhile, however, the Company decided to take independent action, and, with its charter at its back, put a heavy duty† on the import of spirits into its territories; following this up, it next prohibited the introduction of spirits into the countries north of the confluence, thus confining the traffic to the pagans of the Lower Niger; again it reduced the area, and admitted spirits only as far north as the seventh

* *Vide* Appendix I.

† Two shillings per imperial gallon.

parallel, the almost prohibitive duty in the Delta acting as a most effective check on the consumption.* This action gave rise to considerable disaffection among the Delta tribes, who looked on cheap drink as one of the benefits to be derived from European traders; but, regardless of all this, the Company fully intended, had it continued to govern, to place a total prohibition on the introduction of gin and rum into its dominions. Why this total prohibition in Southern Nigeria has not been enforced under the new administration we will show when reviewing the several West African problems remaining to be solved by the Great Powers. The gunpowder and arms mentioned above as imports are of the most harmless description; the gunpowder is that known as "trade powder," with propulsive powers hardly sufficient to discharge a bullet from a musket, and the arms consist of nothing more deadly than old-fashioned flint-locks and percussion guns—more dangerous, in all probability, to the firer than to anyone else. Yet the Royal Niger Company always discouraged as much as possible by a heavy import duty† the sale of even these articles, while the introduction into the territories of arms of precision or war *matériel* of any kind was, and of course still is, in accordance with the Brussels Act, absolutely prohibited.

For nearly fourteen years the Royal Niger Company continued its work of administration; then the Government became convinced that the time had arrived for "an Imperial Authority to be on the spot." How the revocation of the charter was brought about, and the terms agreed on between Her Majesty's Government and the Company, as well as the details of the reconstruction of the administration, we shall reserve for a later chapter.‡ One thing we would impress on the reader—the royal

* In two years the import of spirits was reduced by one-half, though in the adjacent Oil Rivers, it may be remarked, the raising of the import duty has made little difference to the quantity of liquor consumed. *Vide* Chapter XIX.

† One hundred per cent. *ad valorem*.

‡ *Vide* Chapter IX.

charter was revoked not because the Company had in any way failed in its administration, but for the reason that it was considered that it had fulfilled its mission.*

A few statistics concerning the Royal Niger Company will be of interest, more especially as, until the revocation of the charter was decided on in 1899, none were ever published :—

ROYAL NIGER COMPANY, CHARTERED AND LIMITED;
(GOVERNMENT.)

Year.	Duty on Imports.	Duty on Exports.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£	£	£
1887	24,037	16,781	42,396	71,324
1888	34,467	19,915	55,771	73,830
1889	30,610	25,920	57,652	82,870
1890	36,768	24,656	62,430	92,258
1891	53,767	31,198	89,667	107,975
1892	51,648	50,272	103,155	107,115
1893	56,897	52,324	110,756	99,256
1894	26,381	46,867	74,160	104,001
1895	40,614	46,260	87,806	108,963
1896	44,462	51,556	102,330	117,905
1897	47,873	45,330	94,045	135,637
1898	63,054	48,981	113,305	135,093

Of the duties on imports and exports in the above table the Royal Niger Company contributed, on an average, 95 per cent. per annum, which shows that it had practically a monopoly of trade. The revenue was derived from these duties and from small receipts from licences; while the expenditure included the whole cost of administration, the principal items being subsidies to native chiefs, special missions and punitive expeditions, maintenance of constabulary force and flotilla, administrative stations, salaries of staff, various sundry expenses, and interest at five per cent. on the public debt of the Niger

* On resigning its royal charter, the Niger Company was re-formed, in order to continue its trading operations. Some of the old members became directors of the new Company, but Sir George Goldie ceased to have any official connection with it.

Territories (£250,000). From these figures it would appear that the Company, in administering its territories, was out of pocket to a very considerable amount. The trade balance sheets of the Company from 1887 to 1898 were given in full in a Parliamentary paper of 1899 (No. C.—9372) and would not interest the general reader, who will probably be quite content with the knowledge that the ordinary shareholders (as has already been said) were always able to count on receiving a dividend of something over 6 per cent. per annum.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE.

The Oil Rivers—The British Consulate at Fernando Po—The Court of Equity—The Oil Rivers Protectorate—Major Claude MacDonald appointed Commissioner and Consul-General—Recruiting of a Constabulary Force—Appointment of Vice-Consuls—Benin—The Trouble with Nana—Benin City—The Benin Massacre—The Punitive Expedition.

AS in the last chapter we traced the career of the Royal Niger Company, we propose now to deal with the rise and progress of British ascendancy in the adjacent coast regions, which were incorporated in the British Protectorate of the Niger in 1884–85. Prior to that, the various rivers, known as the Oil Rivers,* had been for many years virtually in the hands of English trading firms, and earlier still were the resort of slaving vessels and palm oil merchants—more generally known in those days as “Palm-oil Ruffians.”

Until 1882 Great Britain had no Consul resident in the Oil Rivers, the British Consul who looked after this part of the coast living on the Spanish Island of Fernando Po, of which, for many years, he was also Spanish Governor.† Among the earlier of these officials may be mentioned Captain John Beecroft (previously referred to), Hutchinson, Richard Burton (the famous traveller), Charles Livingstone (brother of the explorer), Hopkins,

* The so-called Oil Rivers from west to east were the Benin, Escravos, Warri (Forcados), Brass, St. Nicholas, St. Barbara, St. Bartholomew, Sombrero, New Calabar, Bonny, Andoni (St. Antonio), Opobo, Kwo Ibo, Akpayafe, Kwa, and Cross, the last four of which empty themselves into the Old Calabar before reaching the sea.

† His official title was Consul for the Bight of Biafra and the Island of Fernando Po. Burton calls the latter the “Foreign Office Grave.”

and Hartley; while with the establishment of the Consulate at Old Calabar we find associated such names as Hewett, H. H. Johnston, and Aynsley. When the Consul resided at Fernando Po, his visits to the Oil Rivers were only occasional, since he had to depend for conveyance entirely on the chance arrival of a British gun-boat at Fernando Po. Consequently the rivers were left very much to themselves, though, as the P.O.R. began to be superseded by the better class of English trader, who became more or less a resident in the country, it was soon evident that some form of local administration was a necessity. The traders therefore established in most of the rivers what was termed a Court of Equity, whose members conferred occasionally with H.M.'s Consul; but the Court had no real jurisdiction, and the most it could do was to regulate, in a measure, affairs connected with trade. This it appears to have done with a certain amount of success, and it gained sufficient influence over the chiefs (principally by holding out the threat of sending for the Consul and a gun-boat) to induce them to expend their "comey" in opening up trade routes. "Comey" (the native rendering of custom duty) was the duty levied by the chief on imports, and, in the days of sailing vessels, consisted, as a rule, of European goods to the value of a puncheon of palm oil for each mast in a ship; while "bar comey" or "custom-bar" was the export duty—one iron bar on each puncheon of oil shipped by the trader. Besides these, there were commissions known as "Ex-bar," "Work-bar," "Gentleman's Dash," and "Boy's Dash."

The existence of the Court of Equity was of short duration, but with the removal of the British Consulate to Old Calabar the power of the Consul increased. By the Order in Council appointing the Consuls they were given full power and authority to carry into effect, and enforce by fine or imprisonment, the observance of any treaty between Great Britain and the native chiefs; to make rules and regulations for the peace, order, and good government of Her Majesty's subjects in the territory; and to remove any individual who should prove refractory

after being twice sentenced. A small gun-boat* was also placed permanently at the disposal of the Consul, who, now backed up by a show of force, was enabled to establish a measure of authority. Many of the native chiefs saw the advantages of making treaties with Great Britain, and much was done in this respect by Consuls Hopkins and Hewett; still, at its best, the Consular authority was wholly inadequate for such a wide tract of territory. Difficulties were always arising; the chiefs quarrelled amongst themselves, stopped trade, were punished by being bombarded by a gun-boat, and the whole state of affairs was unsatisfactory. This continued for some years after Great Britain had proclaimed a Protectorate over the Oil Rivers, but in 1889 the Government decided that the time had arrived for some better form of administration, and despatched a Special Commissioner (Major Claude MacDonald)† to interview the chiefs of the various rivers and discover their opinions on the subject. The chiefs, one and all, expressed a desire for direct Imperial administration, and agreed to surrender their “comey” rights in favour of the Government, so that the revenue thus collected might defray the cost of administration. The organisation of the new administration was entrusted to Major MacDonald, and on the 1st August, 1891, the Oil Rivers commenced a new era under the title of the Oil Rivers Protectorate.‡

Major MacDonald was appointed Commissioner and Consul-General, with headquarters at Old Calabar; while in each of the five other principal rivers (viz. Opobo, Bonny, Brass, Forcados, and Benin) were established a Vice-Consul and Deputy-Commissioner, a Consular Agent, and a judicial officer in charge of the Consular Court, with European and native clerks.§ No detail

* H.M.S. *Alecto*, paddle-steamer.

† Now Sir Claude M. MacDonald, K.C.B., G.C.M.G., H.B.M.'s Minister at Tokio, and the defender of the Peking Legations in 1900.

‡ Re-named Niger Coast Protectorate.

§ In 1896 the system of the division of the Protectorate for administrative purposes was reorganised. The Protectorate was

which could affect the success of the administration of the Protectorate was forgotten, and prior to its inauguration every minor department had been worked out. As an example of organisation perhaps nothing more complete has ever been undertaken in so short a time; everything was carefully planned in England; on the appointed day the Consul-General and his staff of officials left London for the Oil Rivers, each knowing exactly where he was going and what he had to do. Thus this little band of "Pilgrim Fathers," as they called themselves, fell into their places at once; the Vice-Consuls and Consular Agents were dropped at their various rivers, and the Departmental Officers commenced to organise their several departments—Customs, Post Office,* Military, Marine, Treasury, and Botanical.† The Customs Department was of immense importance, since on it depended the revenue which was to pay for the whole administration, and, without at present entering into details, we will only say that the duties collected came up to the most sanguine expectations, and it was possible in 1893-4 to pay off the initial debt (£14,000) of the Protectorate, so that from the outset it was self-supporting. For the purpose of keeping order among the wild native tribes a Constabulary force was organised—recruited from the Yoruba country‡—and several armed river steamers and

divided into three divisions—the eastern, central, and western—each under a divisional consular officer. The eastern division was synonymous with the Old Calabar districts; the central division comprised the districts between the Obo and Brass Rivers; and the western district included Warri and Benin.

* The following extract from the Annual Report for 1895-6 is curious: "Postal Revenue: decrease of £1,614. Due mainly to the requirements of stamp collectors (who had bought largely of the new issue in 1894-5) being satisfied."

† A London office was established, under an Agent-General, where all arrangements were made for the purchase of supplies and plant, the appointment of officials, etc. In 1896 this was abolished, and the work taken over by the Crown Agents for the Colonies.

‡ Strength of the force in 1897, 450 men, armed with Martini-Henry carbines, four 7-pounder guns, two Maxims, and two Nordenfeldts. In 1898-9 an addition was made to the force of 100 men,

launches were put into commission. The difficulties of the various officials in commencing their duties were great ; there was little to go on, but, in the course of time, the natives began to grasp the situation, and to understand that the new Vice-Consul of the district had powers somewhat similar to those of the old Consul, except that he was always present, and so there was no question of being able to take advantage of his absence to commit lawless acts on British subjects. The natives were not technically British subjects, and order amongst themselves was maintained by their chiefs, though practically the latter were given to understand from the beginning that British power was paramount, and that the Consular Court was available to anyone who chose to make use of it.

In this manner complete control was established in the neighbourhood of the various trading stations, and the Vice-Consuls, in the capacity of political officers, gradually extended their influence among the surrounding tribes ; new roads and markets were opened up ; tribal warfare was suppressed, and steps were taken to put a stop to such barbarous customs as prevailed among the people. The eradication of all these inhuman practices is, however, a matter of time, and, though much has been done, a great deal still remains to be done before the natives can be persuaded to abandon the long-cherished beliefs of their ancient religion.

To describe the Niger Coast Protectorate as administered previous to 1st January, 1900, it will be simplest to take each district separately, and to deal, once and for all, with the geographical and topographical details, which, of course, remain unchanged. We will neglect, for the time being, the seat of government, and commence with the westernmost district, viz. Benin. The river which gives its name to the district flows down in a tortuous course from the north-east, and enters the sea at

the Maxims were increased to five, and the force was re-armed with the Martini-Enfield .303: Each man carried a month's provisions and 100 rounds of ammunition: For increased strength (1902), see page 127.

a point, $5^{\circ} 3' \text{ E.}$ and $5^{\circ} 46' \text{ N.}$, in the Bight of Benin—famous by reason of the old couplet so often quoted :

“Beware and take care of the Bight of Benin,
Whence few come out, though many go in.”

The mouth of the river, owing to the somewhat shallow water on the bar, is only navigable by vessels drawing less than twelve feet of water ; consequently, ocean-going steamers proceed to the Forcados River, passing thence by the creeks to Benin. Seven or eight miles from the mouth and on the right bank of the river is a creek * by which canoes can pass to Lagos town (a distance of 170 miles) ; two or three miles higher up, and on the same bank, is the Brohemie Creek, leading to Nana's Town, while ten miles further on are two other important creeks, whose entrances lie almost opposite one another, that on the right bank coming down from Gwato, the port of Benin, that on the left bank connecting with the Forcados River. Above this the river is still of some size, but at a distance of about fifty miles from its mouth, close to Sapele,† it bifurcates, the two arms being known respectively as the Jamieson and the *Ethiope*.‡ The boundaries of the district through which this river and its tributaries flow were, on the west the Colony of Lagos, and on the east the Escravos or Escardos River, which separated the Benin district from the Warri district.

When the Protectorate was first established, there were two principal chiefs through whose hands the whole trade of the Benin country passed—the King of Benin and his vassal Nana, both of whom have since had to be suppressed and removed. With the latter accounts were settled in 1894 ; but the story of the Benin massacre

* First navigated by a European in 1891, when Captain Gallwey and Mr. Haly Hutton made the journey in five days. *Vide Geographical Journal*, Vol. I., page 122.

† A good road from Sapele to Benin City (about twenty-five miles) was commenced in 1897.

‡ Called after Mr. Jamieson and his steamer the *Ethiope*. *Vide* page 34.

and its results is of more recent date, and not likely to be forgotten for some years to come. First, then, as to Nana: he was a Jakri, and the most powerful chief anywhere near the coast, monopolising the trade of the river, and virtually ruling the whole country to the south of Benin City. His principal town was Brohemie (or Nana's Town as he preferred to call it), which was a pattern of what a native town should be—well laid out, with wide streets, and kept scrupulously clean,* while his own house and those of his chiefs were built on European models. Nana himself was well educated, of great ability and industry, and more or less enlightened. His sole idea was to make money, and for many years he had been a middleman of the palm-oil trade carried on between the natives and the European traders, as were and still are all the other principal chiefs along the coast. Nana's trading "boys" were sent far afield in search of produce, and, presuming on the acknowledged power of their chief, did pretty much as they pleased, as often as not seizing produce without paying for it. Whether Nana himself encouraged this *zabberdasti* (to use an Indian term), or whether he had not sufficient authority over his people to check it, is doubtful; but in 1894, in spite of the frequent remonstrances of the Vice-Consul, matters had arrived at such a pass that it was decided to depose Nana and break up his clan. Egged on by his war chiefs, Nana now openly defied British authority and threatened to stop all trade.

On the 19th August, H.M.S. *Phæbe*, then at St. Paul de Loanda, was telegraphed for, and, being joined by H.M.S. *Alecto* and a detachment of the Protectorate Constabulary, commenced operations on the 26th August.† Nana's Town was situated in the midst of a dense mangrove

* Immense labour must have been expended in constructing the town. The site was an artificial one, made among the swamps, of white sand brought from a distance of many miles; while the houses were built of clay, also conveyed to the spot from a distance.

† *Vide* "Journal of the Royal United Service Institution," Vol: XXXIX., page 191.

swamp, the only means of communication between it and the Benin River being the Brohemie Creek, which, however, was known to be protected by batteries along its banks. It was therefore determined to cut a path through the bush and take the batteries in flank, a feat successfully accomplished, though not without immense labour; and, having carried the first battery, the force commenced to advance on the town itself. Fresh paths were cut through the bush, but, owing to the innumerable creeks and the heavy fire from the guns of the town, it was found quite impossible to make rapid progress, and eventually the enemy's fire became so galling that the force was obliged to retire. It was evident that without reinforcements the town could not be taken; accordingly, during the nineteen days that it took to procure these from the Cape, the *Phæbe* and *Alecto* were occupied in blockading the creeks and bombarding the town from the Benin River.

By the 20th September the *Philomel* and the *Widgeon* had arrived, and the bombardment became brisk. On the 23rd the advance commenced through the bush, a path being cut in a somewhat wider circuit than previously, and though Nana kept up a steady fire with his artillery and machine guns, little damage had been done when the party returned to the boats in the evening. On the following day the final attack was made, 100 Constabulary men and 136 bluejackets proceeding by land, while the remainder of the force advanced up the creek in the ships' boats. The result was a complete success, and the enemy, finding their guns taken in front and flank, made but a feeble resistance before taking to flight. The town was in the possession of the British force by 8 a.m., and during the next two days it was destroyed. An attempt was then made to capture Nana, but although his canoe, with all his personal belongings and £324 in English money, was captured, he himself managed to escape overland to Lagos, where he surrendered on the 26th October, being afterwards tried at Old Calabar and sentenced to be deported to the Gold Coast. By the removal of this

turbulent spirit immense benefits accrued to the trade of the district, the merchants being enabled to deal direct with the producers, who, in their turn, gained the advantage of receiving a fairer price for their palm-oil.

Nana, in spite of his shortcomings, had generally proved friendly to Europeans, and had certainly been a keen trader; but with regard to Benin proper, whose capital lies considerably to the north and at a distance from the river, matters were different, the kings of Benin for many years past having discouraged intercourse with Europeans. The first Englishman to visit Benin City was a Captain Windham, who conducted a trading expedition from England in 1553, with the result that he himself and most of the crews of his vessels died from one cause or another. Windham was followed, thirty-five years later, by James Welsh, who, within the next five years, made two voyages to Benin, and brought home a remunerative cargo of ivory, palm-oil, and pepper. From this time Benin City * was frequently visited by Portuguese and Dutch merchants, and occasionally by travellers of other nations,† and from all accounts, a century or more ago, was still the capital of a very powerful kingdom, being laid out with wide streets, and possessing even handsome buildings. Of late its decay has been rapid, and forty years ago, when Burton visited the place from Fernando Po, the country was already on the decline.

Trade with Europeans had never been regularly established, for the principal reason that few legitimate merchants cared to risk dealing with a monarch who perpetrated the vilest crimes, and who was quite capable of ordering the crucifixion of anyone with whom he happened to be displeased. The slave-traders, not being so squeamish, and for the most part as unprincipled as any king of Benin, cared little how they obtained their cargoes so long as they filled their ships, and therefore

* Jakri name Ubini. The Benin people themselves call it Ado.

† Giovanni Belzoni, the Egyptian traveller, in an endeavour to reach Timbuctoo, died at Gwato (Benin territory), of dysentery, 3rd Decembar, 1823.

made the Benin River a regular port of call. The abolition of the slave trade completed the ruin of Benin, as the king, incensed at the loss of his revenue, did all in his power to prevent all dealings with Europeans, a condition of things which continued until about twelve years ago, when several British merchants established factories on the banks of the Benin River, and for a time succeeded in carrying on indirectly a fair amount of business with Benin City. The support afforded by the presence of a permanent Vice-Consul, in 1891, gave them sufficient encouragement to open factories higher up the river—at Gwato and Sapele—and, later on, when the hulk *Hindoostan* was towed up to the latter place, and converted into the Vice-Consulate (1893), the traders came in touch with the producers themselves. These were mostly Sobos, dwelling considerably to the east of Benin City, for the Binis were restrained from trading by reason of the fetish embargo placed on their movements by the king, who was regarded as the greatest juju-man of West Africa. They were forbidden by juju either to leave their country or to cross water, and so it was hopeless for them to attempt trade, except through Jakri or other middle-men.

One of the first duties of the new Vice-Consul of the district was to open up relations with the king, and for this purpose, in 1892, Captain Gallwey* visited Benin City, and succeeded in concluding a treaty with his Majesty, by which it was hoped that the trade of the country would be greatly developed. As time passed, however, it became evident that, in face of the treaty, the king had no intention of becoming less barbarous in his customs, or more friendly in his attitude towards white men, than had been his predecessors. Neither did the overthrow of Nana appear to impress him, for he was so convinced of his own power as a juju-man that he snapped his fingers at all interference. He continued to keep the trade of the country closed, and placed every obstacle in the way of his people visiting the British factories, and of the British merchants visiting his city.

* Now Lieut.-Colonel Gallwey, C.M.G., D.S.O.

It was to remove these difficulties and to induce the king to carry out the terms of the treaty which he had made with Great Britain that the Mission started for Benin City on the 1st January, 1897. It consisted of the Acting-Consul-General, Mr. Phillips, eight other Europeans,* and some 250 native carriers, besides superior natives, such as interpreters and clerks. On the 2nd January the party reached Gwato† in launches, and on the following morning commenced the eventful march to Benin City. Previous to this, messengers had been sent to the king, conveying presents, and acquainting him of the Consul-General's proposed visit; the reply brought back was friendly, but the king requested that the white men would postpone their visit for two months—until the annual ceremony, or what he called "making his father" (*i.e.* performing sacrifices at his father's grave), was over. The Consul-General then sent to say that he could not wait, but would come at once. The king replied that he would receive the Mission. What happened is soon related. The path admitted only of movement in single file, and the line of carriers, almost a mile in length, was preceded by the principal European officers. The distance to the city was estimated at twenty-eight miles, and it was proposed to push on to a village on its outskirts that day, and visit the king the next morning. Half the march was completed without the slightest suspicion of intended treachery, when suddenly a shot was fired in front, followed immediately by a deadly fusillade from the dense bush all along the line.

So utterly unexpected was the attack, and so excellently had the ambuscade been arranged, that within a few minutes nearly every member of the party had been

* Major Copland Crawford, Vice-Consul of the Benin and Warri District; Mr. Locke, District Commissioner of Warri; Captain Maling, 16th Lancers; Mr. Kenneth Campbell; Captain Boisragon; Dr. Elliot; and Messrs. Powis and Gordon.

† Gwato was the only port from which Europeans were allowed to approach the city, all other places having been declared fetish by the king.

shot down. Of the native carriers only a few escaped, while, with the exception of Captain Boisragon and Mr. Locke, all the Europeans were massacred. The two Englishmen, after seeing their companions killed, took to the bush, in which they wandered for five days, enduring every species of hardship, and suffering much from several wounds, but eventually arriving in safety at the Gwato Creek.* The action of the Consul-General in taking an unarmed mission into Benin territory against the wish of the king has been severely criticised; whether he acted unwisely or not we will not now discuss; it is sufficient to know the unfortunate result.

The punitive expedition which followed is more satisfactory reading.† No sooner had the news of the massacre reached England than the Cape Squadron was ordered up to undertake the duty of punishing the king and his people for their treacherous conduct, and so well was everything managed that within six weeks of the fate of the Mission being known—before King Abu Bini had even finished “making his father”—a British force had destroyed Benin City and the chief towns of the country, and had returned to the coast. Neither was it, as in the case of many of these campaigns, a “walk-over,” for the Binis resisted stoutly at several points, and the bush-fighting was most trying work, though in the end the natives found it quite impossible to withstand shells, rockets, and Maxim guns.‡ Benin City itself was occupied on the 18th February, and the state in which the place was found passes all description; in every direction were to be seen crucified corpses, headless trunks, huge pits filled with bodies in various stages of decomposition,

* A thrilling account of their adventures is given in “The Benin Massacre,” by Captain Alan Boisragon, one of the two survivors, 1898:

† “Benin, the City of Blood,” by Commander R. H. Bacon, R.N., 1897:

‡ Until the bombardment had commenced the king fully believed that his ju-ju was strong enough to prevent any white man entering the city:

and altars dripping with fresh human blood. "The one lasting remembrance of Benin in my mind," says Commander Bacon, "is its smells. Crucifixions, human sacrifices, and every other horror the eye could get accustomed to, to a large extent, but the smells no white man's internal economy could stand. Four times in one day I was practically sick from them, and many more times on the point of being so. Every person who was able, I should say, indulged in a human sacrifice, and those who could not sacrificed some animal and left the remains in front of his house. After a day or so the whole town seemed one huge pest-house." We spare the reader further descriptions of the loathsome spot, to which, not inappropriately, has been applied the name of the "City of Blood."

Simultaneously with the advance on Benin City two other columns had been engaged in the capture of Gwato and Sapobar, in both of which operations there was considerable trouble with the natives, though they were soon reduced to reason.* Only one thing was wanting to complete the success of the expedition; the king and his war-chiefs fled on the approach of the British force, and though every effort was made to effect their capture, it was several months before they eventually gave themselves up.† That they got their deserts we need hardly say.

The only other district in the western division of the Protectorate was Warri,‡ lying between the Benin district and the territories of the Royal Niger Company, the Forcados River forming the boundary between the two administrations. The river is one of the most important mouths of the Niger; and for a distance of some

* The total British casualties in the three columns were: Killed, two officers and five men; wounded, five officers and twenty-seven men. The survivors suffered severely from fever afterwards.

† August 5th, 1897.

‡ Other names, Iwere, Owere, Owihere, Awerre, Warre, Quarre: Barbot calls it Dowerre, Awerri, Ouwerri, Oveiro, and Forcados indiscriminately.

ten miles from the sea is three or four miles in width, while its bar is practicable for the largest ocean-going vessels, there being as much as nineteen feet of water at high tide. Lagos, which, as is well known, is most unfortunate in its approach from the sea, has long utilised the Forcados for the trans-shipment of cargo from the large steamers into vessels of light draught; and this mouth has many advantages over the Nun* for the transport of merchandise, *matériel*, etc., to the upper part of the Lower Niger. Thus Burutu, at the mouth of the Forcados, has become the port of Northern Nigeria, and has supplanted Akassa as the chief depôt of the Niger Company.

The Vice-Consulate of the district was situated close to the native town of Warri (the Jakri capital), some forty miles from the Forcados mouth, and was surrounded by several old-established European trading-houses, whose business in palm-oil was done chiefly with the Sobo people, Jakris† in some instances acting as middle-men. The little settlement, lining the banks of the creek, still exists, and presents a picturesque appearance, though, situated as it is in a typical mangrove swamp, it must be decidedly unhealthy. Much has of recent years been done to improve the place; the bush has been cleared and converted into coffee plantations, and several new and handsome buildings have been erected for the officials, whose energies have resulted in strengthening the British position in the country, and in inducing a most friendly feeling towards Europeans among the neighbouring tribes.

* Akassa.

† Shakri, Zakri, Jakry, Jekri, Zekri, Dzekri, [Dsekiri, Izekri, Ishekiri, Tchekre, etc;



ENGLISH FACTORY ON WARI RIVER.

Photo : A. F. Mockler-Ferryman.



VILLAGE ON THE
FORCADOS RIVER.

Photo : A. F. Mockler-Ferryman.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE (*continued*).

The Brass District—The Attack on Akassa—The Fight at Nimbé
—New Calabar—Bonny—Opobo—The Notorious Ja Ja—Okoko
Jumbo—Old Calabar—Its European Settlements.

THE districts of the central and eastern divisions of the Niger Coast Protectorate, from west to east, were Brass,* New Calabar, Bonny, Opobo, and Old Calabar (the capital), which may be considered to constitute the *real* Oil Rivers. Brass was in 1895 the objective of an Imperial expedition, and therefore is of more than ordinary interest. As a mouth of the Niger it has been known to Europeans for many years, for the reader will remember that it was here that the Landers eventually found themselves at the termination of their voyage of discovery;† but, long before the interesting problem had been solved by the two brothers, Brass and the adjacent Oil Rivers had been the resort of traders in slaves and palm-oil, who, however, troubled themselves but little about such geographical questions as whence came this great river. The trading factories‡ are situated a short distance within the river's mouth, close to the native village of Tuon,§ the capital of the Brass chiefs being some thirty miles higher up the river, at Nimbé.|| Besides these places, the only other town of any importance is Fishtown, built among the mangrove

* Portuguese name, Rio Bento ; the English name, Brass, was given to the place from the brass utensils (*Neptunes*) and rods, which were the principal imports a century ago.

† *Vide* page 27.

‡ Cable communication with Lagos and Bonny.

§ Tuwon, Twa, Brass-town.

|| Nembé, Dembé, Nempé, Numbé, Itebu ; and, by old traders, simply Brass. The people are known as *Nimbé nungos*.

swamps, about two miles from the factories. Numerous creeks connect the river with the main stream of the Lower Niger on the west, and with the St. Nicholas,* St. Barbara, St. Bartholomew, Sombrero, New Calabar, Bonny, and other Delta Rivers on the east, while the creek leading from Brass to Akassa is of some considerable size, and navigable for river steamers drawing six or seven feet of water. The people of Brass† are looked on by most of their neighbours as inferiors, and though some of the chiefs are wealthy and powerful, the bulk of the population consists of slaves, either bought from the inland tribes,‡ or born in the households of the chiefs or headmen, many of whom were themselves originally slaves.

The Brass district§ was, perhaps, the most difficult part with which the Protectorate Government ever had to deal, since it was impossible to get thoroughly in touch with the people, owing principally to the existence of what the chiefs considered a grievance. In 1856 the Brass chiefs concluded a treaty with Great Britain, by which they agreed to give up all connection with the traffic in slaves, and to deal only in such legitimate commodities as palm-oil, receiving, besides the price of the oil, duty or "comey," previously referred to. These chiefs were not producers, but merely middle-men, and by sending their canoes and trading boys up country they were able to obtain, from the riverside natives of the Lower Niger, a large amount of oil. The operations of Macgregor Laird and independent trading vessels on the Niger told on the Brass trading chiefs, since their markets were tapped by the white men; and upwards of twenty years ago they laid their complaints before the British Consul. They, however, received little satisfaction, but hoping that

* Native name, Kola.

† The old tribal marks were six short perpendicular incisions between eye and ear.

‡ Principally Ibos.

§ The language spoken in the Brass district is a dialect of Ijo, Idzo, or Oru:

the Government would close their markets to European traders, and thus restore them to themselves, they signed further treaties. The climax came with the proclamation of the Protectorate of the Niger Territories and the grant of a charter to the National African Company, by which the position of the Brass chiefs was made worse than ever. Previous to this they had only European competition to fight against, but now they found that they had been virtually cut off altogether from their former Niger markets, being considered by the terms of the charter foreigners, and consequently unable to trade in the Company's territory without paying the regulation duties and taking out licences. Undoubtedly they had a grievance, although, had they been less conservative in their ideas, they might, perhaps, have developed new markets in other directions. This they neglected to do, preferring to dispute the right of the Company to interfere with them. In a few years they became inveterate smugglers, and their lawless conduct resulted in more than one brush with the Company's customs officials, who were obliged to see their regulations observed.

Chagrined at the apparent disregard paid to their complaints by the British Government, the Brass chiefs grew disaffected, and, in 1893, even threatened to drive all Europeans from the river, though this was prevented by the arrival on the spot of two men-of-war and 200 men of the Niger Coast Constabulary. But their hatred of the Niger Company still continued, and they swore to revenge themselves for the loss of their markets.

Akassa has been mentioned in a previous chapter as the old main depôt of the Company, and situated on the right bank of the Niger, a few miles within the Nun mouth. Here, at times, there were enormous stores of ivory and valuable goods awaiting shipment to England, as well as a considerable quantity of European commodities for stocking the up-river stations; but as a trading post it was considered by the Royal Niger Company of little or no importance, and, consequently, besides the beach-master and sundry mechanics and labourers, there were

few permanent officials, though the Agent-General periodically visited the place. No more favourable object for plunder could be imagined, and the Brass people were, of course, well aware of this. The Company's officials had, on several occasions, been warned that an attack on Akassa was in contemplation, but as the Brass people showed no signs of carrying their threats into execution, the oft-repeated warning began to be disregarded, and little or no increase was made in the garrison of the place. In January, 1895, matters came to a head, and, unknown to the officials of the Niger Coast Protectorate in charge of the Brass district, the chiefs organised a monster expedition, in which every village was represented by a contingent of armed men and a fleet of war canoes.

On the 27th January, the Vice-Consul at Brass received an anonymous letter warning him of the coming attack on Akassa; but, having no force at his command, he was unable to do more than send on the letter to the Agent-General of the Company, who was at the time at Akassa. This officer, although not believing that the Brass people would venture to attack in force, decided to take precautions against any small raids which might possibly be meditated, and stationed himself at night at the head of the landing-stage, with a machine-gun commanding the river. A small steamer was sent to patrol the creeks leading to Brass, but owing to the darkness of the night and a heavy mist hanging over the river (here a mile or so in width), the Brass canoes crossed unobserved, and the force,* landing some distance below the officials' quarters, commenced the attack from a position which was not exposed to the fire of the gun at the landing-stage. The fight that ensued was of the fiercest description, and though the few Europeans and many of the native *employés* made good their escape, Akassa was completely sacked, and numbers of Kruboyes and other native servants of the Company were either slaughtered or taken prisoner. The appearance at the river's mouth

* About two thousand men.

of a steamer, which was mistaken for a man-of-war, caused the victorious Brass men to beat a hasty retreat, though not before they had secured their loot and their native prisoners. These unfortunates were conveyed to Nimbé, where, on Sacrifice Island, they were publicly executed and then eaten by the frenzied savages.* This revolting finale to their revenge the Brass people afterwards explained by asserting "that it was their ancient custom to kill and eat their prisoners of war; and, also, that at this time it was thought advisable to have a big human feast in order to get rid of an epidemic of small-pox then prevalent in the district."†

Within a few days the Consul-General was on the spot, and, in conjunction with a naval brigade, the Niger Coast troops, towards the end of February, commenced an attack on Nimbé. The Brass men offered considerable resistance, but the Ogbolomambri quarter of Nimbé and Fishtown were burned to the ground, and the inhabitants driven into the bush. The result was not altogether satisfactory, as the chiefs, for the most part, refused to surrender, and it was impossible to follow them into the intricacies of the vast mangrove swamp. Moreover, the actual damage done to their property was immaterial, as their huts could be rebuilt in a few days, and they were able to carry away in their flight all their belongings.‡ Later in the year, Sir John Kirk, G.C.M.G., was sent from England to inquire§ into the cause of the rising, when

* Twenty-four *employés* were killed at Akassa, and their heads were taken away as trophies. Forty-three prisoners were eaten at Nimbé, and twenty-five others were eventually released.

† "Report by Sir John Kirk on the Disturbances at Brass." Africa. No. 3 (1896).

‡ They eventually paid a heavy fine.

§ Many interesting facts were elicited at this inquiry. The king of the Brass people, Chief Koko, had originally professed Christianity, but he and many of his followers had returned to fetishism, "because they had lost faith in the white man's God, who had allowed them to be oppressed." Chief Warri and a few other headmen adhered to Christianity, and refused to allow their twenty-five prisoners to be sacrificed.

eventually the matter was amicably settled, and peace re-established in the district.

The New Calabar district was situated between Brass and Bonny, and had only one important trading-station—at Degama—where the Vice-Consulate was established on board the hulk *George Shotton*, anchored in the Sombrero River, at a distance of about thirty miles from the sea. The rivers and creeks in this part of the Protectorate are numerous; in fact, in the districts of New Calabar and Bonny there is almost as much water as dry land, and Degama can be approached from the sea by ascending either the Sombrero River (the most direct route), the New Calabar River and the Degama Creek, or the Bonny River and Boler and Cawthorne Creeks.

Like their neighbours of Brass, the people of New Calabar (residing principally at Bugama, Abonema, and Backana) had a market grievance against the Royal Niger Company, but satisfactory arrangements were subsequently arrived at. About eighty miles due north of Degama lies Oguta Lake, situated at a distance of some twenty miles in a direct line from Akra Ugidi, on the left bank of the Lower Niger. From this lake flows the Oratshi River,* which, after receiving from the Niger a stream known as the Ndoni Creek, empties itself into the Sombrero River almost opposite Degama. The New Calabar chiefs obtained a great proportion of their palm-oil from the Oguta markets, which were, however, closed to them by virtue of treaties made between the Oguta chiefs and the National African Company. This gave rise to bad feeling between the New Calabar people and the Company, until, eventually, the boundary between New Calabar and the Company's territories was fixed at Idu, a town about half-way between Degama and Oguta Lake.

The next district on the east was Bonny, with headquarters close to the town of the same name.† The Bonny

* In its lower course called the Engenni.

† The African Direct Telegraph Company has a station here, the nearest station to Old Calabar. There is also a telegraph office at Brass, but telegraphic communication with Northern Nigeria is carried on *viâ* Lagos, Jebba, Lokoja, and the Benué.

River was at one time by far the most important of all the Oil Rivers, and in the days of the slave trade was the principal port on the coast,* but of late years, owing chiefly to the opening up of New Calabar and Opobo, it has declined considerably. The settlement, consisting of several European factories, is built on the left bank of the river, and the native town lies within a few hundred yards, in a low and swampy situation, while, half a mile or so beyond and nearer to the sea, is the Mission Station—a remarkable contrast (in the matter of cleanliness) to the town. The people are of a very low type, thoroughly sodden with trade gin, and, until within the last few years, addicted to every species of vice. But the place has improved somewhat under British administration, and cannibalism and other ancient customs have been suppressed.† At a distance of about twenty-five miles up the river from Bonny stands the town of Okrika,‡ whose inhabitants are a continual source of trouble to the Consul. They are confirmed cannibals, eating all captives of war, and have on several occasions been convicted and punished for this. In 1887 they were fined £200 for killing and eating 160 members of a neighbouring tribe, and in 1892 a number of Okrikans were tried for cannibalism and sentenced to penal servitude. In 1898 trouble again arose, and it was necessary to despatch an expedition to suppress the chief of Omoko-roshi. As British authority increases it is hoped that these unruly savages will be persuaded to lay aside their barbarous customs, and settle down in peace.

The Opobo district, lying between Bonny and Old Calabar, has given less trouble to the British officials than any other district, the chiefs upholding the British authority and assisting in the work of civilisation and progress.

* During the palmy days of the slave trade it is said that 16,000 slaves were exported annually from Bonny.

† The native names for Bonny are Obane, Ibane, or Ebane. The principal industry of the people is straw-plaiting.

‡ The Okrika people keep large herds of cattle, which is somewhat remarkable for these parts.

This may, perhaps, be accounted for in two ways—the punishment dealt out to them in 1887, when their chief, the notorious Ja Ja, was deported; or the respect felt for Consul-General MacDonald, who brought back Ja Ja's corpse to Opobo for burial. Ja Ja was one of the most enlightened chiefs of the country, and had risen from the position of slave to that of headman, having amassed considerable wealth in his trading transactions. His inveterate foe was Oko Jumbo of Bonny, whose antecedents had been similar to those of Ja Ja, and who had also made money and become a chief. Both men had been Bonny slaves, and were at one time friends; but, having quarrelled, Ja Ja established himself at Opobo. A prolonged war was waged between Opobo and Bonny,* and Ja Ja being the aggressor, was summoned by the British Consul to desist. This he refused to do, and in other ways made himself generally objectionable to the British traders,† until men-of-war arrived and blockaded the river, when Ja Ja was removed from the scene to St. Vincent (Cape Verd). Here he remained a prisoner at large for some time, and, after petitioning the Government on several occasions, it was at length considered advisable to allow him to return to his country, on the condition that he renounced all his former rights. Accordingly he was transferred to Teneriffe, where he was to meet the Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate, and be conducted back to Opobo; but before this could be carried out he unfortunately died. His chief companion during his exile was a favourite bull-dog, whom he facetiously named Oko Jumbo, after his old enemy of Bonny.

The European factories are built on both banks of the river close to its mouth, and the native town of Opobo lies about four miles higher up stream, and on the right bank. Above this, in the early years of the Protectorate, little was known of the country, but every effort was made

* Each of the two chiefs had a force of some 8,000 men, armed with modern weapons, who fought in large war-canoes.

† He levied "comey" on each trader to the extent of £70.

to open it up,* and, at the end of 1896, a successful mission visited the important town of Bendi, which had hitherto been closed to Europeans, and treaties were negotiated with the chiefs. The distance from Opobo is about 180 miles, and previous to the visit of Major Leonard the place had been regarded as of most evil repute, for in its neighbourhood was supposed to exist the supreme juju court†—the very name of which has always been a terror to the Oil River natives.

It remains only to describe the home district—Old Calabar, which in extent and importance is superior to any of the outlying districts of the Protectorate. The country hereabouts is watered by several large rivers, the principal of which are the Kwo-Ibo and Cross‡ on the west, and the Old Calabar, Kwa (or Akwa), and Akpayafe on the east. Of these the last four unite at a short distance from the sea to form what is called the Old Calabar Estuary,§ and the Cross River flows down from the far interior in a long and winding course, having on its banks numerous towns and villages peopled by a variety of interesting tribes. “The natives of Old Calabar and the lower Cross River,” says Consul Johnston,|| “belong to the Efik race. In language, and, no doubt, in origin, they are allied to the Ibos of the Niger Delta. They have scarcely been settled at Old Calabar more than a century and a half. Originally they came from the Ibibio district on the Cross River, and drove out and partly supplanted the Akpa tribe, who originally inhabited Old Calabar. The Efik people are now much mixed in blood, having imported many slaves from the Cameroons.”¶

* Military posts were subsequently established at Acquettah and Ngwa, some distance inland.

† “Long Juju.” *Vide* Chapter XVI.

‡ Native name, Oyono.

§ Ten or eleven miles wide, and having numerous wooded islands.

|| Now Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., late Special Commissioner for Uganda.

¶ “Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society,” Volume X. (1888), page 754.

The European settlements, as well as the native town (Duke Town) of Old Calabar,* is distant about forty miles from the sea, and, owing to the vast improvements carried out by the Protectorate Staff, the place was soon transformed into a picturesque and sanitary town—without doubt the healthiest station in the Oil Rivers. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the Consulate and public offices were built on a hill some 200 feet above the river, and consequently above the damp mists rising off the swamps. By the side of the river a wide marina, planted with trees, was constructed; hospitals, barracks, and various public buildings were erected; and the native town, usually in these parts a dirty and unsanitary spot, was placed under strict regulations. Life at Old Calabar has always had many advantages over other places on the Coast; social gatherings, at which English ladies (from the Missions and elsewhere) are to be found, relieve the monotony of the officials' existence; while such pastimes as cricket, lawn tennis, golf, and even cycling—things unheard of on the West Coast of Africa a few years ago—have become popular forms of amusement.

The interior of the district has been explored in several directions, and advanced posts have been established at Uwet, at Itu (sixty miles up the Cross River), and at Ediba (eighty miles higher up). The Cross River furnishes the most important waterway in this part of the Protectorate, and, as far back as 1842, was ascended by Beecroft for a distance of nearly 200 miles—to the rapids, which now form one of the Anglo-German boundary points. The whole course of the river lying in British territory has now been brought under the control of the Southern Nigerian Protectorate and is patrolled by an armed stern-wheel steamer. The natives have given some trouble, and several punitive expeditions have been found necessary; but the country is gradually accepting the new order of things, and is settling down to peaceful pursuits. One of the first expeditions of the Niger Coast

* The other important native towns in the immediate neighbourhood are Fish Town and Creek Town.

Protectorate Administration was directed against the town of Okerike, whose chief had been guilty of murder. The town was burned and the chief executed. Then followed a display of arms in the Okoyon country to put a stop to human sacrifices, and on the Kwo Ibo for a similar purpose, though in neither case was it necessary to fire a shot. In August, 1895, an expedition, consisting of 200 of the Constabulary,* with native allies, proceeded about 150 miles up the Cross River to punish the Ediba people, when the town of Ediba was shelled and destroyed. In the spring of 1896 a second expedition was despatched to the same country, and one of the chiefs hanged; while, at the beginning of 1898, some severe fighting took place at the town of Ekuri, above Ediba, resulting in the burning of the town. The pacification of the Quas and Inokuns was brought about at the same time, though not without the destruction of several towns and villages.

Such is a general view of the Niger Coast Protectorate, whose existence, though short, was long enough to prove that the care bestowed on its initial organisation was not thrown away. In the matter of trade no enormous improvements could be expected; the trade of the region was well developed before the Oil Rivers Protectorate came into being, but the more settled form of government was, of course, most beneficial to the British traders in assisting them to open up new markets, and in abolishing the monopoly hitherto held by the "middle-men" chiefs. The actual figures remained almost unchanged, averaging a total trade of about £1,600,000 per annum; but we must remember that there was little time for developing the resources of the interior, for the main object was to firmly establish British rule in the coast regions. This may be considered to have been successfully accomplished, and a step-by-step advance made inland; but the country has drawbacks not possessed by any other of our West African possessions. Being so intersected by creeks and swamps, road-making is almost an impossibility, and railways can never be hoped for, so that

* *Vide* page 96 (footnote).

the waterways must ever remain the principal trade routes of this Venice-like Protectorate, and the sole method of advance is to push military posts and trading stations to the heads of these waterways. The time may come when it may be possible to remove all Government and commercial headquarters away from the pestilential neighbourhood of the coast to the higher and healthier regions of the interior; but until the native officials have been sufficiently educated to carry on the administrative duties on the coast this cannot be hoped for. Sir Ralph Moor (the Consul-General), with reference to this, said in his report for 1897: "I would suggest that some scheme might be drawn up for the sending of natives, when they have obtained sufficient proficiency in the schools of West Africa, to India or Ceylon, where, after a short course in the native colleges and schools, they might for a period be employed in the departments of administration. By this system of education in a country where the object lessons of more advanced civilisation would be before them, they could, no doubt, become competent and capable administrators in their own country."

In the matter of the rudimentary education of the natives of the Oil Rivers, Government schools have not as yet been established, but grants* have been made to the various Missions for the development of industrial schools, which have proved of inestimable benefit. The chiefs very frequently send their sons abroad to be educated, and a considerable number come to England—some of them receiving a University education. This class of native will, doubtless, become of great assistance in the administration of the country; but the over-education of the poorer classes has been found, in neighbouring British Colonies, to produce idleness, and even destitution, since natives who have acquired a smattering of English consider that any employment other than that of clerk in an office is too hard and too degrading.

* In 1898-9 about £1,000.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.

A Study in Colonial Evolution—The Foreign Office Letter—The Treasury Minute—The Royal Niger Company Act—The Two Protectorates.

“THE raw material is worked into shape by the Foreign Office until the time arrives when the finer processes of the Colonial Office are applicable.” These words of a well-known statesman explain fully the method adopted, as considered most suitable, for the gradual expansion of our Empire, and the administration of British Nigeria in the past and in the present is an excellent example of the step-by-step development of a British possession. At first we find the Foreign Office acting as guardian of a Chartered Company in one part, and in the other part as guiding star to a totally different form of government, viz. Consular Jurisdiction. Then follows the transition—the Foreign Office has played its rôle, and the Colonial Office steps in to apply the “finer processes.” The Chartered Company of the Niger and the Niger Coast Protectorate pass away, and from their ashes arise the British Protectorates of Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria.

Let us, however, see how the great transformation scene was worked on the stage. That the machinery was in good order the last three chapters have shown, and for the final shift all that was required was the pull of the string—the stroke of a pen—when two newly named British Colonial possessions appeared before the footlights. That the whole thing was somewhat sudden there can be no denying; everyone who knew anything of Nigeria was aware that direct Imperial control over the northern parts was merely a matter of time, but few contemplated that the time was so near at hand. Events,

have, however, moved rapidly of late years in this quarter of the globe, and the dread of fresh international complications compelled the Government to take the one step which could avert difficulties with other European Powers.

In June, 1899, the following letter was addressed to the Treasury by the Foreign Office :—

Foreign Office, 15th June, 1899.

SIR,

The Marquess of Salisbury has for some time past had under consideration the question of approaching the Royal Niger Company with a view to relieving them of their rights and functions of administration on reasonable terms. His Lordship has arrived at the opinion that it is desirable on grounds of national policy that these rights and functions should be taken over by Her Majesty's Government, now that the ratifications of the Anglo-French Convention of June 14th, 1898, have been exchanged, and that the frontiers of the two countries have been clearly established in the neighbourhood of the territories administered by the Company. The state of affairs created by this Convention makes it incumbent on Her Majesty's Government to maintain an immediate control over the frontier and fiscal policy of British Nigeria such as cannot be exercised so long as that policy is dictated and executed by a Company which combines commercial profit with administrative responsibilities. The possibility of the early claim by the French Government to profit by the advantages in the Lower Niger which are secured to them by the Convention, makes it essential that an Imperial authority should be on the spot to control the development of the policy which actuated Her Majesty's Government in granting those advantages, and to prevent the difficulties which would be sure to arise were the Company's officials alone to represent British interests.

There are, moreover, other cogent reasons for the step now contemplated. The West African Frontier Force, now under Imperial officers, calls for direct Imperial control; the situation created towards other firms by the commercial position of the Company, which, although strictly within the rights devolving upon it by Charter, has succeeded in establishing a practical monopoly of trade; the manner in which this

commercial monopoly presses on the native traders, as exemplified by the rising in Brass, which called for the mission of inquiry entrusted to Sir John Kirk in 1895, are some of the arguments which have influenced his Lordship.

The question is not new to the Lords Commissioners, who, at Lord Salisbury's suggestion, offered confidentially in November, 1897, have had under consideration the terms on which the transfer could be made. Lord Salisbury does not therefore propose to enter into the financial aspect of the case, but would ask their Lordships to endeavour to come to an early settlement with the Company.—I am, etc.,

(Signed)

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

The Secretary to the Treasury.

TREASURY MINUTE, dated 30th June, 1899.

The First Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer state to the Board that Her Majesty's Government propose to give notice to the Niger Company of Her Majesty's intention to revoke the Charter of the Company.

The Charter contains provision that in case at any time it is made to appear to Her Majesty in Council expedient that the Charter should be revoked, the right and power is expressly reserved, by writing under the Great Seal, to revoke the Charter; nevertheless, Her Majesty's Government have felt that the Company is entitled to full recognition of the position which it has created for itself, and to the rights which it has acquired in the territories covered by the Charter.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has accordingly been in communication with Sir G. T. Goldie, as the Chairman of, and as acting on behalf of, the Niger Company, and has concluded with him an agreement, subject to the sanction of Parliament, by which, from the date on which the Charter is revoked :—

The Company shall be relieved of all its administrative powers and duties, and shall assign to Her Majesty's Government the benefits of all its treaties and all its land and mining rights of whatever sort and however acquired, but shall retain—except as hereinafter specified—its plant and trading assets, and its stations and waterside depôts, with customary rights of access, buildings, wharves, workshops, and the sites thereof.

On the transfer to them of the above-mentioned powers, duties, and rights, Her Majesty's Government will assume entire liability for the annual payment of £12,500, now a charge upon the administrative revenue of the Company, being interest at 5 per cent. on £250,000, the public debt of the Niger territories, repayable at par on 1st January, 1938.

The right to redeem the stock or any part of it at £120 per £100 stock on 1st January or 1st July in any previous year on giving three months' notice is reserved by the Government.

Within one month after the revocation of the Charter, Her Majesty's Government will pay to the Company a sum of £150,000 as the price of the rights aforesaid, and as compensation for the interruption and dislocation of the Company's business which will result from the revocation of the Charter.

Within the same period Her Majesty's Government will pay to the Company a further sum of £300,000 in repayment of sums advanced by the Company from time to time, including interest thereon, for the development and extension of the Niger territory in excess of the revenue from customs duties and charges levied by the Company under the provisions of the Charter, such advances being in excess of and distinct from the necessary expenses of the ordinary civil administration of the territories.

Her Majesty's Government, on assuming the powers, rights, and duties aforesaid, will impose a royalty on all minerals which may be worked in such portion of the British province of Northern Nigeria about to be established as is bounded on the west by the main stream of the Niger and on the east by a line running direct from Yola to Zinder, provided that such minerals are exported from a British port or pass through a British Custom House.

Her Majesty's Government will pay to the Company, or its assigns, one half of the receipts from any royalty so imposed for a period of 99 years from the revocation of the Charter, and no specific taxation shall be imposed on the mining interest, as such, which would prevent the imposition of such an amount of royalty as may be compatible with the development of that industry in the territories in question.

On the revocation of the Charter, Her Majesty's Government will take over from the Company its war materials and

buildings for administrative purposes, and so much of the Company's plant, including steamers, buildings, and land at stations, wharves, stores, etc., as is specified in the schedules attached to this Minute. An inventory of the stores taken over is to be settled by an officer nominated by the Government and an officer nominated by the Company not later than 1st October next. A sum of £115,000 is to be paid to the Company for everything included in this clause.

My Lords approve the terms of the Agreement as stated to them by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and direct that an order may be submitted to the Queen in Council revoking the Charter of the Company on a date to be specified in such order.

Let copies of this Minute be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

This practically settled everything, for Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Niger Coast Protectorate and for Nigeria* had already valued on the spot the various plots of land, buildings, steamers, stores, etc., to be taken over from the Royal Niger Company—the sum agreed upon being, as mentioned above, £115,000. Anyone wishing for full information as to how this sum was arrived at will find the items of the valuation given in detail in the Blue Book of 1899 (C-9372), and we will only summarise them here under two heads, viz. Land and buildings, £65,000; vessels and fighting material, £50,000. "The Royal Niger Company Act" (62 and 63 Vict., c. 43) set forth what is contained in the above letter and Treasury Minute, the Treasury being empowered to issue out of the Consolidated Fund sums to the amount of £865,000 for the purpose of paying off the Royal Niger Company. The Bill passed through Committee without amendment, and third reading on July 27th, 1899.

A year later (viz. 7th August, 1900) the Treasury issued an "Account of the Money Expended and Borrowed, and the Securities Created, under the Royal Niger Company Act, 1899," as follows:—

* A Commissioner for Nigeria had been appointed some years before the Royal Niger Company surrendered its charter.

ROYAL NIGER COMPANY ACT, 1899, 62 & 63 VICT. C. 43.

ACCOUNT OF MONEY EXPENDED AND BORROWED, AND SECURITIES
CREATED.

I.— <i>Account of Money Expended,</i>		£	£
In redemption (at £120 per £100 Stock) of the Public Debt of the Niger Territories ..		—	300,000
Paid to the Royal Niger Company :—			
Price of Land and Mining Rights, and Compensation for Interruption of Business, etc.	150,000		
In Repayment with Interest of Sums Advanced by the Company in excess of the Revenue, to develop the Territory ..	300,000		
For Stores, Buildings, Steamers, etc. ..	106,895		
			556,895
			£856,895

The whole of this Sum was issued from the Consolidated Fund, but £36,895 was subsequently repaid and charged to the Vote for Colonial Services (*see* Supplementary Estimate, House of Commons Paper, No. 48 of 1900).

II.—*Account of Monies Borrowed and Securities Created.*

Borrowed, repayable by a Terminal Annuity, to be charged to Votes of Parliament, the first payment to fall due in 1901—2 £820,000

Treasury Chambers,
7th August, 1900.

E. W. HAMILTON.

Meanwhile, on the 1st January, 1900, the Imperial authorities took charge of the Niger Company's territories, about 40,000 square miles of which were handed over to the Niger Coast Protectorate to be incorporated in the newly-named Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, while the bulk remained to form the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.* The following are the arrangements which have so far been made for administering the two Protectorates :—

* Estimated area of Southern Nigeria, 62,000 square miles ; of Northern Nigeria, 320,000 square miles.

SOUTHERN NIGERIA.

Of the limits of Southern Nigeria it need only be said that the new Protectorate includes the whole of the Niger Coast Protectorate as already described, with the very extensive addition of the Delta portions of the Niger Company's Territories. Thus the boundaries of Southern Nigeria are on the west the British Colony of Lagos, on the east the German Cameroons, on the south the Atlantic, and on the north a line (coterminous with the southern boundary of Northern Nigeria) running from Owo on the west, through Idah on the Niger River, to Takum on the Cameroons frontier—for all intents and purposes along the 7th parallel of N. Lat. Southern Nigeria is administered by a High Commissioner, four Divisional Commissioners, three Travelling District Commissioners, and nine District Commissioners, with a Chief Justice, Puisne Judge, Attorney General, and other officials.

There has as yet been little alteration in the administrative arrangements mentioned some few pages back, though the country taken over from the Niger Company has been divided up so that the western portion is included in the Western District; and the main Niger River, with the adjacent land, has been included in the Central District, having a Consular Court at Asaba; while the other two districts are known as the Eastern and the Cross River. The establishment of native Courts of Justice has proved thoroughly successful, and the greater part of the Protectorate is now watched over by Native Councils and Courts, rendering great assistance to the European Courts. There still remain, however, considerable tracts of country which have not come under civilising influences, and it must be many years before the advantages of British rule are realised by the more remote tribes. The natives are of the lowest type, and conservative to a degree; to attempt to thrust European ideas on them hastily is an impossibility, and of this the High Commissioner in his report for 1900 makes a point, summing up his remarks thus: "The work of opening up inland from the coast

has been slow, and must always be so, for if done in a hurry and with no thought for the welfare and improvement of the people, it would take a very short time for the country to fall back again into its former state." But, in spite of this, he maintains that as regards finances and prospects of future development Southern Nigeria is in a most flourishing condition.

Without wearying the reader with a mass of statistics, it will doubtless interest him to know something of the state of affairs which induces the High Commissioner to have these great expectations. In the first place, there is the record of ten years to go on (for, though its name has been changed, the Protectorate remains virtually the same), and this record is certainly a remarkable one—if only from a financial point of view. A new British possession has been acquired, has paid its way through-out, and has a balance in hand of nearly £70,000. Than this there can, perhaps, be no better proof of success, and it is satisfactory to be able to say that this has not been produced by a "money-grubbing" policy, but has resulted from the carefully worked out scheme of the first Consul-General and his staff.

NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE.

Year.	Imports.	Exports.	Total Trade.	Revenue.	Expendi- ture.
	£	£	£	£	£
1891-2 (half-year)	295,529	269,238	564,767		
1892-3	729,890	843,500	1,573,390		
1893-4	929,333	1,014,087	1,943,420		
1894-5	739,864	825,099	1,564,963		
1895-6	750,975	844,333	1,595,308	155,513	145,044
1896-7	655,978	785,605	1,441,583	122,441	128,411
1897-8	639,698	750,223	1,389,921	153,181	121,901
1898-9	732,640	774,648	1,507,288	169,568	146,752
1899-1900	725,798	888,955	1,614,753	164,108	176,140

The revenue is derived almost entirely from duties on certain imports, such as liquor, gunpowder, salt, and

tobacco, other articles being imported free. The duties imposed on liquor will be dealt with in a later chapter when discussing the problem of the liquor traffic. The nature of the exports will be seen from the list given in Appendix I., and though little hope is entertained of finding new varieties of indigenous products suitable for export, there is every evidence that the natives are becoming year by year more industrious, and the trade in rubber, timber, and a few other commodities is likely to increase very considerably.

The Protectorate, it must be remembered, is still in its infancy, and has still much uphill work before it; numerous barbarous tribes have to be dealt with, and for at least another decade we must expect an annual punitive expedition or two. For this purpose the force at the disposal of the High Commissioner, viz. the 3rd Niger Battalion, West African Frontier Force (30 officers and 1,000 men, with a proportion of artillery) is none too strong; but training, discipline, and arms of precision make up for numerical deficiency, and the proximity of other British (native) troops—in Lagos and Northern Nigeria—gives confidence. So far, the most important work that this Southern Nigerian force has been called upon to carry out has been the subjugation of the notorious Aros, inhabiting the country between the Opobo and Cross rivers. The expedition, launched in December, 1901, had for its principal object the destruction of "Long Juju," and, though it everywhere encountered obstinate resistance, it succeeded in suppressing for ever the inhuman practices of the Juju priests of Aro-Chuku, thus freeing the wretched pagans from the fetish yoke under which they had lived from time immemorial.*

NORTHERN NIGERIA.

The boundaries of the Northern Protectorate are as follows: On the south, the northern limits of Southern Nigeria and of Lagos Colony; on the east, the German

* *Vide* Chapter XVI.

Cameroons and that portion of Lake Chad which lies within the French sphere of influence; and on the west and north the French spheres of Dahomey and Sudan. The principal officials are a High Commissioner, a Deputy High Commissioner, Residents and Assistant Residents, Secretary to the Administration, Treasurer, Chief Justice, Attorney General, Marine Superintendent, and Director of Public Works. The headquarters of the Administration have so far been at Lokoja, but as soon as the necessary buildings have been erected they will be moved to a more salubrious site on the Kaduna River, some fifty miles to the north of Bida.

Everything is so entirely different to that which prevails in the southern Protectorate, that methods which apply to the latter cannot be applied to Northern Nigeria, where, for instance, in place of a population of barbarous pagans inhabiting foetid swamps, we find that the majority of the people are semi-civilised Mohammedans dwelling in a comparatively healthy land; and where, moreover, the natives have yet to learn that, as subjects of the Great White King (be they pagans or Mohammedans) they will have equal rights and equal prospects. The establishment of the *Pax Britannica* in this enormous tract of country is a big undertaking, but during the short time that the new Administration has been in existence immense strides have been made, and the greater part of the country has been divided up into administrative districts, and placed in charge of British political officers. The districts thus established, or on the point of being established, are: Ilorin, Kabba, Middle Niger (or Bida), Lower Benué, Upper Benué, Nupé, Kontagora, Borgu, Zaria, Bassa, Muri, Bautshi, Yola, and Upper and Lower Bornu. A glance at the map will show that the remainder of the Protectorate contains three great centres, viz. Gando, Sokoto, and Kano, each of which will doubtless eventually become the headquarters of a political officer, thus completing the arrangement of districts, at any rate for the time being.

On the ability and energy of the political officers



NORTHERN NIGERIA REGIMENT:
THE MAIN GUARD.



A COMPANY OF THE
NORTHERN NIGERIA REGIMENT.



NORTHERN NIGERIA REGIMENT
MOVING QUARTERS.

depends the future of the country. The Fulahs regard with suspicion the intrusion of the white man, since they know that British occupation means the death-blow to slave raiding. Much can be effected by diplomacy, but in dealing with these people diplomacy must be backed up by force—troops must be available should the political officers require their support. This fact was well understood by the present High Commissioner when he first knew that the Government intended taking over the territories from the Royal Niger Company, and as early as 1897 he commenced to raise and organise the Imperial Hausa Constabulary, now known as the Northern Nigeria Regiment, West African Frontier Force. The fighting strength of this force at the present time is about 100 British officers, 50 British non-commissioned officers, and 2,500 men, divided as follows: Three batteries of artillery (Hausas), two battalions of infantry (Yorubas, Hausas, and others), and detachments of sappers, mounted infantry, etc. In these troops every confidence is placed, and they have had ample opportunities of proving their efficiency and of displaying their fighting qualities. It is, of course, a small force to even police these far-extending regions, much less to supply the material for the expeditions which from time to time become necessary; but, at the same time, it may, perhaps, be considered a healthy sign that the officials deem it possible to establish British supremacy in a country covering some 320,000 square miles with 2,500 native soldiers.

What has been done in Northern Nigeria since the 1st January, 1900, and what remains to be done, will be fully entered into elsewhere in these pages, and in describing in detail the territories administered by the High Commissioner we shall adhere to the old divisions of the country into States; for the new administrative districts are only temporarily planned out, and it is, moreover, evidently the intention to preserve the old native States, and to grant them such autonomy as is possible. The principal of these States may be briefly enumerated

as follows : On the extreme east, Bornu ; then Sokoto, occupying a central position, and including Adamawa, Muri, the old Hausa States, and several minor kingdoms ; while on the extreme west lie Gando (with Nupé and Ilorin), and the pagan State of Borgu.

CHAPTER X.

OUTLYING STATES OF NORTHERN NIGERIA.

The Independent Kingdoms of Bornu and Borgu—The Bornus—Their Origin and Characteristics—The Bornu Empire—The Fulah Rising—El Kanemi—Bornu since 1851—The Natives of the Country—The Capital, Kuka.

ALTHOUGH the greater portion of the territories now administered by the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria consists of the provinces tributary to the Fulah Empire, there are two independent kingdoms of considerable importance, viz. Bornu in the north-east, and Borgu in the west of the Protectorate—the former Mohammedan and the latter pagan.

Bornu* may be considered to be a *Central* Sudan State of equal, and at one time superior, importance to Darfur and Wadai, and having no connection with the old Hausa or the Fulah States of the Western Sudan. From a historical point of view it is, perhaps, the most remarkable of all these Mohammedan kingdoms, since it has a story that can be traced back from generation to generation for almost a thousand years—not altogether a legendary story, but one that has been written down with more or less care.† It rose to great power; it became notable for its civilisation and for the warlike qualities of its people; then, like all Muslim kingdoms, it suddenly commenced to decline. In the zenith of its might Bornu defied

* The tribal markings of the Bornu pagans are usually a series of curved lines cut into the cheeks.

† Previous to the beginning of the sixteenth century (or A.H. 900) there was no written history of Bornu. About that time the history was written up from oral tradition, and, henceforward, regular records were kept, and will, it is hoped, one day be made available to the world.

even the Fulahs, but its constant successes in war produced in the people and their rulers that unfortunate confidence that begets callousness. The Bornus imagined themselves to be invincible; the army was neglected, and the ruling classes became luxurious in their habit of living—a taste which soon spread to the people of the towns. The nation, from being warlike, soon developed that effeminacy so fatally evident in the peaceful Oriental, with the result, as we know now, that Bornu recently became an easy prey to the adventurer Rabeh* and his horde of partially trained troops.

Of the origin of the Bornu people it is impossible to say anything definite, for of pre-record times little is known, and it must be remembered that until the last century no European had approached the country. Still, such Arabic historians as Ibn Said (A.D. 1282), Ibn Battuta (A.D. 1353), Makrisi (A.D. 1400), and Leo Africanus (A.D. 1518), and the Fulah Sultan Bello give it as their opinion—founded, without doubt, on the best information obtainable—that the earliest-known Bornu kings were of Berber origin, and that, furthermore, the Bornu people held the tradition that they themselves were descended from the Berbers. It is also remarkable that the Hausas still call the Bornus “Berbere.” That the present inhabitants are descendants of the aborigines of the country is most improbable, and everything tends to show that Bornu was, in the early days of Mohammedanism, conquered by Arabs from the north, who, in all probability, consisted of several tribes, and who, having forced Islam on the conquered race, gradually formed a mixed nation. One thing, however, is certain: Bornu is the oldest Mohammedan kingdom in this part of Africa, its rulers, if not also the majority of its inhabitants, having been followers of the Prophet several hundreds of years before the rise of the Fulah power.

The Bornu Empire appears, at different times, since

* The former slave of Zubeir Pasha. He had a brilliant career, but was utterly defeated, and killed by a French expedition, near Lake Chad, in 1900.

A.D. 1,000, to have passed through several distinct epochs, in each of which one or other of the neighbouring tribes gradually incorporated itself in the Empire, and became the dominant power.* The aborigines were, according to the most reliable accounts, pagan negroes of the tribe of So, who were eventually conquered by the Kanuri (Tibus) from the adjacent kingdom of Kanem; and the Kanuri language has remained the language of the people. Leo Africanus tells us that the early kings of Bornu came from the Libyan tribe of the Bardoa, or Berdoa,† but Barth, who studied these matters, regards it as not improbable that by Berdoa was meant rather the Teda or Tibu than the real Berber or Mazigh. Whatever their origin, there seems to be little doubt that the kings introduced northern blood into the country, for until about A.D. 1100 the sultans of Bornu are said to have been “of a red complexion, like the Arabs,” and even in the seventeenth century it is recorded that the Bornu army consisted of two parts—the Reds and the Blacks.

Curiously enough, Bornu owed its rise to importance to its neighbour Kanem, who, with the assistance of the Teda, founded the powerful dynasty of the Bulala, and established the great Mohammedan Empire called by Leo Africanus Gaogo, extending, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, from Kanem eastwards to Dongola on the Nile. Now Kanem, as we have seen, had had a hand in the foundation of the Bornu Empire, and, though the latter had declared its independence, the former still continued, in one way or another, to have great influence over the smaller kingdom. This was the state of affairs for many years, until eventually the power of

* Barth mentions the following sultans as having reigned in early times over Bornu : A.D. 1000, Ayuma ; 1086, Humé (the first Mohammedan ruler) ; 1221, Dunama Dibalami ; 1307, Ibrahim Nikalemi ; 1353, Edris ben Ibrahim ; Daud ; 1387, Othman ben Edris ; 1393, Omar ; 1472, Ali Dunamami ; 1505, Edris Katar-kamabi ; 1572, Edris Alawoma ; 1626, Haj Omar ; 1645, Ali ben Haj Omar.

† “Where there is hardly anything but sand, scorpions, and monsters.”—Leo Africanus.

Kanem commenced to decline, when, in the sixteenth century, the Bornu sultan Edris Katarkamabi completely subdued the rival kingdom, and reduced it to the condition of a province of Bornu. Such it remained for more than two centuries, while its suzerain rapidly increased in strength; a great empire was being built up; Mohammedan civilisation had set in, and the warlike rulers of Bornu struck terror into the hearts of every African tribe within a radius of hundreds of miles.

For two hundred years Bornu had no rival worthy of the name, and, having defeated all comers, commenced to look about for fresh conquests. This brings us to the middle of the eighteenth century, when Sultan Ali Omarmi turned his attention to the Tuaregs of the north (the very people in whom the Bornu dynasty had its origin). The Tuaregs had become the inveterate enemies of Bornu, and although the energetic Ali Omarmi succeeded in holding them in check, his successor, Ahmed, was found wanting, and early in the last century the Tuaregs were on the point of overthrowing the Sefuwa dynasty, when a new enemy appeared. The Fulah rising (with which we shall deal at length in the next chapter) was already an accomplished fact, and the weaker parts of the Bornu Empire had been attacked and subdued by this new and unforeseen foe, whose operations were swift and complete; when, just as the great kingdom was about to resign itself to the domination of the Fulahs, there came on the scene a deliverer for Bornu. It was again Kanem that was responsible for the maintenance of Bornu's power, for a sheik of Kanem birth took upon himself to preach a *jehad* against the Fulah invaders, and raise an army to drive them out of the country. Mohamed-el-Amin, el Kanemi,* was born in Fezzan, of Kanem parents, and, having travelled in Egypt, came, as Sheik of the Koran, to Kanem, where he soon gained immense popularity on account of his benevolent disposition; while, as Denham says, "the miracles and cures which he performed, by writing

* Sometimes called Lamino.

charms, were the theme of all the country round." He now came forward (about 1808) in a new light, and in a fabulously short time he had collected a force of Kanembu warriors sufficiently strong to utterly rout the Fulahs and to force them to quit Bornu for ever.

El Kanemi's successes made him the hero of the hour, and the old warlike spirit awoke once more in the breasts of the people of Bornu, who desired their deliverer to become their sultan. This, however, he refused, but, at the same time, he claimed the right to appoint a sultan, and himself retained the dictatorship of the kingdom. The man whom he selected was Dumana, Ahmed's son, but it soon became evident that the choice was not a wise one, and the sheik deposed Dumana and proclaimed Mahomed, Ahmed's brother, sultan in his stead. Mahomed likewise failed, and Dumana again assumed the sultanship, but was eventually slain in battle by the Baghirimis. Ibrahim, his brother, now became sultan, and he it was who welcomed Clapperton to his capital at Kuka* in 1823, though the virtual ruler of the kingdom was still the sheik, El Kanemi. The latter was, in Clapperton's time, engaged in constant warfare with the neighbouring States, and with his old enemies the Fulahs, and we have already related, in a previous chapter, the part played by Clapperton's colleague Denham in these various expeditions. The sheik retained the reins of government until his death in 1835, completing the subjugation of all the neighbouring tribes (including the important kingdoms of Baghirimi, Wadai, and Darfur), and leaving Bornu in a higher state of prosperity and civilisation than any country of Central Africa. He had founded a new dynasty—that of the Kanemiyin—and was succeeded by one of his forty-two sons, Omar, who became sultan, though always preferring to style himself, as his father had done, by the humbler title of sheik.

* Kuka, or Kukawa, was built by El Kanemi, and received its name from the tree most abundant on the spot—viz. the baobab. It is situated about fourteen miles from the western shore of Lake Chad. Before the Fulah invasion the capital was at Kars (or Ghasr) Egomo.

When Barth visited Bornu, in 1851, Sheik Omar was still reigning, though, during the great traveller's sojourn in the country an attempt was made by the old dynasty to dethrone him, and his brother Abderahman actually succeeded in usurping the throne for a few months. Omar, however, continued to reign until 1881, but, in spite of his many good qualities, he was undoubtedly a weak ruler, and his kingdom commenced that decline from which it has never been able to recover. According to the strict letter of the Koran, succession follows from brother to brother; now Sheik Omar, as we know, had originally forty-one brothers, of whom Abba Nas should have, in the natural course of events, become sultan; but Omar, by evading the Koran, arranged that he should be succeeded by his son, Sheik Boubaker, who accordingly reigned until 1884. He was popular, frank, and generous, and displayed superior warlike abilities, which, however, were cut short by his premature death while planning an expedition against Wadai. Boubaker was followed by his brother, Sheik Birahim, who again was succeeded, a year later, by Sheik Ashim. Under Sheik Ashim the great sultanate crumbled away, since he had always been averse to warfare, preferring to live a peaceful and religious life to one of conquest and bloodshed.* His ideas were not those of his subjects, and he had, consequently, never been popular; while his utter disregard for the safety of his kingdom eventually led to the burning of the capital and his flight to Zinder.

The above sketch of the history of Bornu is enough to show that the inhabitants of these inland parts are far superior in every way to the natives of the coast, their superiority, of course, lying in the fact that for several centuries they have been under the civilising influence of Islam, and have had intercourse, by means of regular

* Monteil, who visited Bornu in 1891-2, says that Sheik Ashim was about fifty years of age, had four hundred wives and innumerable children. Abba Kiari, son of Sheik Boubaker (a great warrior), was heir-presumptive to the throne. "*De Saint Louis à Tripoli, par le lac Tchad.*" Lieutenant-Colonel P. L. Monteil. Paris, 1895.

caravans, with North Africa. Between Tripoli and Bornu there have always existed friendly and commercial relations; Bornu supplied slaves, ostrich feathers, and other produce, while Tripoli returned European goods. The latter, therefore, have become a necessity to the people, and consequently this Central African State offers a valuable market for British merchandise. The fact that the Niger Company's steamers can convey goods to a point on the Benué within two hundred miles of the capital is sufficient to prove that when trade with Bornu by this route becomes firmly established the products of the country will naturally flow in this direction. From Tripoli to Kuka is a land journey of roughly 1,200 miles; the cost of transport is enormous*; and it is unnecessary, therefore, to dwell on the advantages to Bornu of the southern outlet for her trade. The one drawback at present is the nature of the commodity that she most desires to dispose of, viz. slaves, for which there is a ready sale in Tripoli and other Mediterranean ports; to put a stop to this trade, and to induce the people to substitute for it something of value to Europe, will require time. That Bornu will become in the near future a highly remunerative British possession is certain, though whether this will be brought about by opening the route from the Benué, or by a railway connecting Kuka with Sokoto and Lagos, remains to be seen.

We will now consider what may be expected of Bornu in the way of produce other than slaves, but, first, it will be necessary to say something of the country itself. Bornu proper is situated in the basin of the Chad,† and lies, as we have stated, on the extreme north-east of Nigeria.

* Tuareg robbers have always infested this route, but (inspired, it is said, by the Sheik El Sennusi, the false Mahdi of Northern Africa) their depredations in the summer of 1901 increased to such an extent that the chief traders decided to send no more caravans across the Sahara. If this boycott continues, the whole of the trade must pass south, to the Niger.

† Chad is the simplest form of spelling. It is also frequently written Tchad and Tsad, the latter approaching nearest to the native pronunciation of the name.

On the east it is bounded by Lake Chad, the River Shari, and a portion of Adamawa within the German sphere of influence ; its northern boundary is practically the 14th parallel N. lat. ; on the west it adjoins the Sokoto provinces (old Hausa States) of Katsena, Kano, Bautshi, and Muri ; while to the south it is cut off from the Benué by a portion of Muri and British Adamawa. Altogether it may be said to include an area of some 50,000 square miles, and a population of about 5,000,000, though these figures cannot be considered anything more than a mere approximation, since the outlying tribes (more especially those who have remained pagans) are ever striving—and sometimes successfully—to throw off their allegiance to the Mohammedan ruler. The country is watered by the Komadugu* Yobé (or Waubé) and its affluents, entering Lake Chad a little east of the old capital of Yo, and the Komadugu N'Gala flowing into the lake from the south ; while the Shari (the principal feeder of the great inland sea) empties itself within a short distance of the Komadugu N'Gala.†

The soil is everywhere extremely fertile, but a great part of the country is subject, during the rainy season, to excessive floods, as, with the exception of the mountainous region to the south of Lake Chad, the land lies in a depression. Still, it is capable of producing valuable crops, and (when the ruling classes can be persuaded to give up slave-raiding for agriculture) cotton, indigo, wheat, millet, and various cereals will yield rich harvests. As matters stand, it is not worth the people's while to cultivate the soil more than just sufficient to supply their own immediate wants, though, wherever such small patches of cultivation are met with, there is proof enough of the luxuriance of the land ; and the dum and date palms,

* *Komadugu*, in Kanuri, means a mass of water, either a river or a lake ; it is not the name of the river, as modern maps are now writing it.

† Lake Chad has no outlet. Evaporation accounts for its diminishing area. The water is sweet, not brackish, as was at one time imagined.

the baobabs, and acacias with which the country is scattered, each produce, untended, articles of commercial value. Neither is this all, for among the hills in Southern Bornu there are signs of mineral wealth; and tin, if not more precious metals, will doubtless be forthcoming with the development of the country; while the trade in ostrich feathers* (at one time a very important one, though of recent years much neglected) might be resuscitated, and there is still a sufficient number of elephants in the border districts to produce a supply of ivory for many years to come.

To describe Kuka, the capital, when we know that, only a few years ago, it was burnt to the ground by Rabeh, may appear, at first sight, a waste of time; yet the mere burning of a town of this kind means very little, and does not imply total destruction. Kuka is even now fast growing up again on its ruins, and it is unlikely that the general plan of the town will be materially altered. Barth, who resided there for many months on different occasions, describes it very fully, and other writers (including Colonel Monteil)† do not add anything of value to the description

* The trade in ostrich feathers between Bornu and Tripoli was the means of introducing a money currency (Maria Theresa dollar) into the Sudan. Denham (1823) says that, in his time, ostrich skins were worth, in Kuka, three to six dollars; ivory, two dollars per 100 lbs.; and raw hides, two dollars per 100 skins. "The natives have several ways of killing the ostrich. On finding the eggs they will dig a hole near the place, and, covering themselves with earth, watch the return of the bird, when an arrow shot through the brain as she sits kills her, without injuring the plumage. They will also chase them for hours when young, and, taking them alive, they become as tame as the domestic fowl." The traveller Rohlfs mentions having seen an ostrich farm at Magumeri, S.W. of Kuka.

† Just before Monteil's visit (1891) a mission (under Mr. Charles Mackintosh) from the Royal Niger Company had been at Kuka. The French traveller does not attempt to conceal his disgust at having been forestalled by the perfidious Englishman, and his description of his interview with the Sheik (from whom he got little satisfaction) is interesting, particularly when he introduced himself as envoy sent to pay addresses of the *King* of the French to the great and renowned Sheik Ashim, so well known in France.

of Barth. Kuka always owed its importance to its central situation and its connection, by a fairly safe and direct caravan route, with Fezzan and Tripoli, thus filtering, as it were, nearly all the trade existing between North and West Central Africa. Enormous Arab caravans, with long strings of camels, were (until Rabeh's conquest) constantly passing through the town, where a weekly market was held for the sale of various goods, though, perhaps, the most important trade has always been in slaves, camels, and horses.* The scene at the Monday fair is described by Barth as of great interest :—

It calls together the inhabitants of all the eastern parts of Bornu, the Shuwa, and the Koyam, with their corn and butter; the former, though of Arab origin, and still preserving in purity his ancient character, always carrying his merchandise on the back of oxen, the women mounted upon the top of it; while the African Koyam employs the camel, if not exclusively, at least with a decided preference; the Kanembu with their butter and dried fish; the inhabitants of Makari with their tobies; even Budduma, or rather Yedina,† are very often seen in the market selling whips made from the skin of the hippopotamus, or sometimes even hippopotamus meat, or dried fish:

The town itself, when Rabeh sacked it, covered an area of two or three square miles, lying in a long and narrow rectangle east and west, and was divided into two distinct parts, separated by a spacious market-place. The eastern portion was occupied solely by royalty, the western by the Arab merchants‡ and the people of Kuka, and through the centre of the latter quarter ran (due east from the main western gate) the Dendal, or principal thoroughfare. A white clay wall some twenty feet high surrounded each quarter of the town, and a mosque, with walls of the same material, stood just outside the palace, which was built of mud, with a shingle roof. A few of the better

* The present value of a good horse in Bornu is said to be twelve M.T. dollars; a camel, fifteen to twenty dollars. The dollar is still the standard of the currency, cowries forming the small change.

† Pirates who dwell on the Islands of Lake Chad.

‡ Chiefly agents of mercantile houses in Tripoli and Murzuk.

class of houses were constructed of the same material; but, as a rule, the walled-in enclosure, containing the circular straw huts of the family, prevailed. Luxury had, however, of late years taken possession of the wealthier merchants, who had introduced solid-looking buildings of sun-dried bricks with flat roof tops, which gave almost an Oriental appearance to the town.

Of the 50,000 or 60,000 inhabitants, the majority were Mohammedans, born and bred as such, and non-fanatical.* In this latter respect they differed considerably from the more zealous Fulah converts to Islam, who hate their co-religionists of Bornu,† describing them as “lukewarm,” principally because, in the Bornu Empire, women, contrary to Koranic doctrines, have usually been allowed to have a voice in public affairs, and to play an important part in private life. This is certainly a great peculiarity of Bornu as well as of Kanem, whence possibly it originated, and in Kuka the women were, until Sheik Ashim’s flight, very independent, the late Queen Mother (Maguira), for instance, being consulted on all public matters, and having charge of certain provinces. This state of affairs, so seldom met with in a Mohammedan country, may have arisen from the indolence of the ruling classes, who are content nowadays to leave everything to their head-slaves, in order that they themselves may live at ease. The army of Bornu suffered in this respect, as the chief officers had no ambition beyond drawing their emoluments and passing their time peaceably at home. Still, for Central Africa, the army of Sheik Ashim was fairly well-armed and well-trained, though somewhat behind the times. It consisted of about 30,000 men, of whom, perhaps, one-fourth were rough irregular cavalry, partly clothed in quilted suits and chain armour. The front rank carried lances,

* Monteil says that there are three sects in Bornu—viz. *Tidiani*, of which the Sheik is head; *Quedireh*, most numerous; and *Sen-nussiyeh*, comparatively modern.

† The Fulahs and Hausas call Bornu the “land of lies.” The Bornus retaliate, and to call a native of Bornu a Fulah is the grossest insult.

the rear rank swords, and each troop was accompanied by a third rank of infantry armed with a species of boomerang with several sharp points,* intended to be hurled at the enemy. The arms of the infantry consisted of a few modern rifles, a large proportion of flint-locks, spears, swords, knives, and bows and arrows, while some of the men wore a zouave uniform similar to that worn by the Hausa Constabulary on the coast. The artillery was poor; a few guns had been introduced from Tripoli, and others had been cast in the country, but they were of a very old pattern, and not capable of being moved about.

Of Rabeh's conquest of Bornu it is necessary to say something, because, although in a few years' time it will probably have been forgotten, it has certainly thrown the whole country into disorder, and has indirectly affected our policy in these regions very considerably. About the all-conquering "Black Napoleon" much has been written; but, without entering into the details of his wild, adventurous career, it will be sufficient to say that by 1895 he had subjugated Baghirni, and shortly afterwards picked a quarrel with Sheik Ashim, captured the capital, and proclaimed himself Sultan of Bornu. Had he been content with his new conquest and sought the friendship of Great Britain, possibly it would have been beneficial to all parties; but after the destruction of Kuka, he established his headquarters at Dikwa,† whence he permitted his troops to raid far and wide, and, unfortunately for himself, he fell foul of a French expedition in 1900 and was killed in action. On his death, his son Fadl Ullah became Sultan of Bornu, and although only twenty-six years of age he had great weight with his father's troops and retained the confidence of the war-chiefs. It having been ascertained that the new sultan was anxious to throw in his lot with the British, and thus escape French persecution,

* This weapon is carried principally by the Tibus; it is known in the Sahara as *diangar* or *mangal*, and is used also by the Baghirmis.

† In the German sphere of influence.

it was decided, in the autumn of 1901, to open up negotiations with him, and, after the capture of Yola, Major McClintock (Seaforth Highlanders) conducted a mission to Fadl Ullah's war camp at Gujiba. The members of the mission were much impressed by the friendliness of the sultan and by the appearance of his troops, and there is little doubt that the High Commissioner would have acknowledged Rabeh's son as ruler of Bornu.

His calculations, however, were upset by events of an unexpected nature. Fadl Ullah and his brother Niebe had, previous to this, been put to flight by the French, and had buried their guns near Dikwa. Imagining that the French had abandoned the pursuit and were not likely to enter British territory, Fadl Ullah despatched a force of 1,500 men under Eet—a most trusty leader—to bring away the buried guns. This might have been successfully accomplished had it not happened that the Berberes (or conquered Bornus), thirsting for revenge, appealed to the French to come to their assistance, and the latter, nothing loth, fell on Eet's troops and practically annihilated them. Not content with this, they pushed forward, and, assisted by the Bornus, surrounded Fadl Ullah at Gujiba, slew him, and routed his army. Most remarkable of all is the fact that they appointed Abba Gurbe* (the Bornu claimant) sultan of Bornu, or at any rate that they acknowledged his claim to the sultanate.

Whether Fadl Ullah would have settled down under British protection, kept the peace, and ruled wisely over Bornu it is impossible to say. Certain it is that he himself and his followers were vastly superior in every way to the Berberes of the country, and were much more likely to be of assistance in the future administration of the country than the effete natives who were unable to resist the invasion of Rabeh. Had a British force ever occupied Bornu, it is improbable that the French would have crossed the frontier; but with the troops

* Probably the son of Sheik Boubakar, whom Monteil called Abba Kiari.

at his command and the many small expeditions on hand it was impossible for the High Commissioner to occupy the whole country. In 1902, however, a strong force was despatched to the Chad regions to restore the Bornu dynasty, and to attempt to establish something like order in the land, with British Residents and garrisons at Gujiba and at Maiduguri, near Lake Chad.

Enough has been said of Bornu to give the reader some idea of the country, its past history, and the advantages likely to be derived from it by the establishment of peace, and the opening up of trade between the Benué and Kuka;* we will now pass to the western extremity of Northern Nigeria, leaving the Fulah Empire (in which we include Sokoto and Gando) for separate chapters.

Borgu, the western boundary State of Nigeria, is a pagan kingdom situated almost entirely on the right bank of the Kwora, or Middle Niger, and is known also by the name of Bariba; in fact, Bariba is the name by which the country and its people are always locally spoken of. Little is known of its early history, though native report says that at some period, many centuries ago, emigrants from the Barbary States settled in the country, and gave it the name by which it is still known. These Berber settlers, it is said, were driven out of Northern Africa by the Mohammedan conquerors,† and brought with them their own religion, which appears to have contained some

* Besides Kuka there are few towns of any great importance. Zinder is, perhaps, the only one worthy of mention, but it is now within the French sphere, though its trade passes either to Kuka or to Katsena and Kano. There is also a caravan route from Zinder to the north, through Air or Asben.

† It is probable that both Borgu and Bornu had their origin in the Barbary States, the settlers in the former being expelled on refusing to accept Islam, those in the latter at first content to adopt the new faith, but later on deciding to quit their homes. As a corroboration it may be mentioned that the Borgus claim relationship with the Bornus, and the native name for Bornu is Berebere or Baribari, which, like Bariba, may be considered to be synonymous with Barbary and Berber.

of the doctrines of Christianity.* By their Mohammedan neighbours the Baribas have, however, always been considered pagans, though they themselves assert that their belief is in one "Kisra, a Jew, who gave his life for the sins of mankind." Whatever they may affirm, there is little doubt that at the present day they are no better than pagans, the only trace that remains of their belief being an annual festival at which are commemorated certain events in the life of Kisra, intermingled with strange heathen rites. The country is divided into several small kingships, and so far there has been little intercourse between the petty chiefs of the interior and Europeans. Duncan† reached Adafodia (due north of Abomey) in 1845, but was murdered, as had been Wolf before him, and no further attempt to enter the country was made until 1894, when Captain Lugard‡ visited the principal towns for the purpose of making treaties on behalf of the Royal Niger Company. It is to this intrepid traveller, therefore, that we are indebted for our knowledge of the interior of Borgu. "Geographically," he tells us,§ "the country does not present any features of marked interest. It is an undulating country, with few and small hills, and no large rivers. The watershed is towards the Niger, which forms its eastern boundary, and the most important rivers are the Moshi (which, in the last fifty miles or so, forms the southern frontier of Borgu) and the Ori, which rises near the capital, Nikki, and reaches the Niger in Boussa's territory. In the extreme west the watershed would appear to be towards the Volta." Geologically there is a great sameness about the country. "Masses of grey granite alternate, or appear simultaneously with

* "It seems clear that a great part of the Berbers of the desert were once Christians (they are still called by some Arabs 'the Christians of the desert'), and that they afterwards changed their religion and adopted Islam."—Barth.

† *Vide* pages 13 and 32 (foot notes).

‡ Now Brigadier-General Sir F. Lugard, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria.

§ "Geographical Journal," Vol. VI., 1895, page 205:

the copper-coloured honeycomb lava which forms the prevailing feature of West Africa, as it does of the greater part of British East Africa. This 'iron-stone' derives its colour from the very great percentage of iron* which it contains." The two important towns of Kiama and Nikki (the capital) were visited, as well as Ilesha, towards the south, when, having successfully concluded the treaties, the mission passed into Yoruba (Ilorin).

The eastern portion of Borgu, adjoining the Middle Niger, belongs mostly to the King of Boussa, whose capital is famous in connection with the death of Mungo Park. With the king the Royal Niger Company was always on friendly terms, though commercially Borgu has up till now proved of little value. Certain main trade routes pass through the Borgu interior, and African towns situated on such highways are always considered to attract trade, though in the case of Borgu (infested with cut-throats and robbers) it will require many years of careful administration, backed up by force, to develop the resources of the land. All this is well known to the British authorities, who are even now busily engaged in curtailing the wanton excesses of the Baribas. When this has been brought about Borgu will doubtless settle down to peaceful pursuits. The chiefs are already displaying great energy in making roads, and the country has a great agricultural future, for the bulk of the population, like their neighbours of Yoruba, are born agriculturists, waiting only for the extermination of the numerous raiding bands to show what their land is capable of producing. These raiders are a veritable curse to the country; the chiefs themselves would willingly carry out the terms of their treaties and encourage commercial intercourse with Europeans; but there exists among the younger generation a species of "Jingoism," which can never permit it to be forgotten that for eight or nine centuries Borgu has been a warlike nation, and the only pagan State able to resist the Fulah invasion. This invincibility they

* The iron is smelted by the natives and made into hoes, which form a species of currency in the country.

attribute to their strange "Kisra faith," though Lugard offers two other suggestions, viz. "first, their reputation for a knowledge of witchcraft and deadly poisons, which renders their poisoned arrows very dreaded; second, to their fighting tactics. So far from dreading to separate their forces, their custom, I am told, when they attack by day, is to make a feint attack simultaneously on front and rear, reserving the bulk of their strength for a strong attack on the centre of a long caravan. This mode of attack by ambush would generally succeed in dividing their enemies' forces and inducing panic. They, however, love most to effect a night surprise."

Whether it be due to their fighting tactics or to their religion, the prowess in arms of the Baribas is beyond dispute. Though surrounded on nearly every side by Mohammedans, thirsting for conquest and for the conversion of the heathen, Borgu remains to this day a State independent of any other native State, and being now under the protection partly of Great Britain and partly of France, it may possibly retain its ancient ideas

CHAPTER XI.

THE FULAH EMPIRE.

The Origin of the Fulahs—The “Yellow Men”—The Fulah Language—Its Two Genders: Human and Brute—The Year 1802—Sheik Othman—His Son Bello—Bello and the Hausas—The Merchants of the Western Sudan—Hausa and Fulah—Which will Survive?—The Sokoto Empire—Native Administration—The Adamawa Country—Muri—Kano.

WE have treated, so far, of what may be called the outskirts of Northern Nigeria, preferring to reserve the heart of the territory for separate discussion, as, in so doing, we are enabled to offer to the reader a more or less connected account of the rise and progress of a comparatively modern African nation. That the great Fulah Empire merits a chapter or more to itself will be apparent when it is known that within its area is comprised more than half the country known as British Nigeria, and probably all the most valuable and important parts of that country. Its head (now under the protection of Great Britain) is the Sultan of Sokoto—Lord of the Faithful, and, in Fulah eyes, second only to the Sultan of Turkey—whose dominions extend from Bornu to Borgu,* and from the Sahara to the Lagos boundary. How this Empire has grown up in the present century is one of the most interesting and remarkable events in the history of West Africa. To speak of the advent of the Fulahs† as an

* It is important to distinguish between these two countries, whose names are a source of endless confusion to the English press, and consequently to the British public.

† Called Fulbe (sing. Pullo) by the Mandingos; Fellani (sing. Bafellanchi) by the Hausas; Fellata by the Kanuri; Fullan by the Arabs; Fellani, Foulfoulde, Peul, Poul, by the French. There are also countless sub-divisions, each with a local name, bearing no resemblance to the foregoing. *Vide* “*Les Peulhs: Etude d’Ethnologie Africaine.*” J. de Crozals, Paris, 1883.



NORTH NIGERIAN CURIOS:

Sandals, Hat, Riding Boots,
Slave Whip, Slippers, Bowls,
Armlets, Bangles, Hairpins, &c.

invasion of the Central and Western Sudan is, perhaps, erroneous, for the movement was, in reality, a revolt by a people who had been settled among the aborigines of Guber for many years; yet, after the revolt had proved successful, it became for the remaining States an invasion in the name of religion, and as prosperous a *jehad* as Mohammedan ever preached. From east to west, from north to south, this mighty wave of conversion swept over the land, carrying all before it; resistance was in vain—Islam or slavery was the only alternative to those of the pagans who escaped the sword.

The origin of the Fulahs is wrapt in mystery, and previous to the year 1802 little is known for certain of their movements, though from occasional scraps of information found in the historical notes of the older tribes we learn that these strange people had been widely spread over all the Sudan countries for many centuries. They had lived a wandering pastoral life, grazing their herds and flocks wherever good feeding grounds were to be found; that they were of a race totally distinct from the negroes was evident; their features were well marked and fine, while their complexion was light—so light in fact that the negroes spoke of them as white or yellow men.* They kept much to themselves, spoke a language of their own, and maintained their general characteristics. Whence they came must remain a matter of pure conjecture, for there is little foundation on which to build their history, though it is generally supposed that they were emigrants from the north or north-east. Their language tells us nothing; and, being unwritten, the few words which bear a resemblance to other languages may be accounted for by the nomadic nature of these people.†

* *Pul*, ruddy or red. "Their name signifies *yellow* or *brown*. They are even called 'Abate,' *i.e.* white men, by the Jukos."—Koelle, "Africa Polyglotta," page 21.

† M. G. d'Eichthal ("Journal de la Société Ethnologique, 1841") endeavoured to prove that the Fulahs were connected with the Malays, affecting to find a certain similarity in the language of these two peoples, though, as Barth points out, the only striking

The earliest records go to prove that the Fulahs had their first known settlements along the lower course of the Senegal, and that they gradually spread towards the east, and this as far back as the fourteenth century. Their intelligence and ability were always considered to be of a superior order, and, although they lived in small colonies as simple shepherds, they were regarded by the negro rulers with a certain amount of suspicion, since on several occasions the little band of wanderers had shown signs of a desire to assert themselves, and to bring their religious opinions to the front. Early in the fourteenth century we find that they sent a Mohammedan mission from their western settlements to Bornu (then a Mohammedan kingdom); by the sixteenth century they were well established about the Middle Niger, and by the beginning of the seventeenth century they had spread as far east as Baghirni. Thus they had overrun the whole of the Western and Central Sudan, from what is now the French Sudan, even up to the borders of the province of Darfur; but the tribe was so scattered that its members had no real power in the land, and the paucity of their numbers forced them to be subservient to the pagans amongst whom they dwelt. The chief men of the tribe were, however, much respected by the dominant race for their learning and astuteness, and in the eighteenth century it was no uncommon thing to find a Fulah priest acting as *mallam* (*i.e.* learned), or right-hand man to the ruler of a Hausa State.

In 1802 occurred events which, though trifling in themselves, brought about the great revolution which similarities are the words for fish and spear. "The Fulah language is distinguished from most others by a remarkable peculiarity. It makes no distinction between the masculine and feminine genders, but divides all things, animate or inanimate, into two great classes—human beings and everything belonging to mankind on the one hand, and on the other everything else, whether animate or not. The former belong to what is called the *human* or *rational*, the latter to the *brute* or *irrational* gender."—Keith Johnston. A few numerals in the Fulah and Kaffir (South African) languages are identical.

resulted in the complete overthrow of the pagans and the establishment of Mohammedism in this part of Africa. There was at that time living in Gober,* at the village of Daghel, an *imam*, or high priest, of the Fulahs, named Othman, whose religious zeal had already begun to tell upon the pagans. Fearing loss of power among his subjects, Bawa, the ruler of Gober, summoned Othman and his chiefs to his presence, and publicly upbraided them for endeavouring to win over his people to their religion. So incensed was Othman at this that he forthwith appealed to all Fulahs to uphold Islam against the heathen, inspiring them with religious songs, until they were seized with the wildest fanaticism and flocked to his standard. Bawa was, however, too strong for his opponent, and the Mohammedans suffered severe defeats; but this only added fuel to the fire, and Othman, assisted by his elder brother, Abd Allahi, and his son, Mohammed Bello, soon commenced to gain decisive victories over the pagans. Gradually the shepherd host was transformed into a disciplined army, and the war-cry of "Allahu Akber" sounded far and wide throughout the Hausa States; successively the ever-victorious Mohammedans reduced the pagan kingdoms to subjection, until in a few years all that vast region which lies between the Sahara and the Rivers Niger and Benué fell into the hands of the Fulahs; moreover, the kingdom of Yoruba (Ilorin) was, later on, successfully attacked and conquered.

Sheik Othman Dan Fodio, Sheik of the Koran, established his capital at Sokoto,† but almost immediately retired from the government of his newly acquired empire, which he divided between his son Mohammed Bello, and his nephew Mohammed Ben Abdallah (son of his brother Abd Allahi). To Bello were given the kingdoms of Zanzara, Katsena, Daura, Kazori, Kano, Hadejah, Bautshi, and Adamawa; while Mohammed Ben Abdallah received Gando, Nupé, Ilorin (Yoruba), and Lafia. No sooner

* The most northern of the Hausa States.

† Clapperton and others write it Soccato, which at any rate, has the merit of showing the pronunciation.

was this partition of the Fulah Empire completed than its founder became religiously mad, although his subjects still continued, until his death, to regard him as a prophet, and to this day his tomb at Sokoto is a place of pilgrimage for devout Fulahs.* That Othman was a very remarkable man is certain, and it is perhaps worthy of note that the period of his power coincides with that of the Great Napoleon. To compare the two men is of course out of the question; they were at work at such entirely different objects; yet it is a strange fact that in 1802 Napoleon was proclaimed first Consul of France and Othman first Sheik of the Fulahs; in 1804, Napoleon and Othman both found themselves Emperors, and their careers ended almost at the same time—the one defeated and in exile, the other victorious and glorified as a saint, but minus his reason—both victims to their ambition.

On the death of Sheik Othman,† his son Atiku attempted to usurp the Sokoto Empire; but Mohammed Bello‡ quickly subdued his brother, and, having kept him in confinement for a year, continued to rule without further trouble on his account. During his reign the different Hausa States endeavoured to throw off the Fulah yoke, but Bello, who had inherited his father's warlike qualities, succeeded in establishing his power in his empire, and at his death (1831), he left to his successor a dominion as well organised as was possible.§ Of

* "Both Hausas and Fulahs believe that the founder of the Empire, Dan Fodio, possessed supernatural powers, that he ranks next after Christ, and that his power of blessing and banning has descended on his successors. But the Hausas believe also in a prophecy that only thirteen Sultans will reign, after which the blessing will depart, and another power will succeed that of the Fulah. The present Sultan is the eleventh of his race."—W. Wallace. 1896.

† About 1817.

‡ Generally known as Sariki N'Mussulmi—*i.e.* Commander of the Faithful.

§ Atiku, the would-be usurper, succeeded his brother, and after him the following have been Sultans of Sokoto: Alihu, son of Bello, by a female slave (1837-1855); Amadu, son of Atiku (1855-1862);

Bello, Clapperton, who knew him intimately, had a high opinion, describing him as not only an excellent soldier, but also a man of considerable scholarship and enlightenment. Although his life was spent principally in warring against the pagans who inhabited the empire bequeathed to him by his father, yet he found time, in the short intervals of peace, for literary pursuits, and managed to write, amongst other things, a tolerably complete historical and geographical description of the country over which he reigned. At first sight this may not appear anything very extraordinary, but it must be borne in mind that the Western Sudan cannot be considered to be a land of literature; its language has no written character of its own, and it was therefore necessary for Bello to write in Arabic—a fact which proves him to have been a person of superior erudition. After Clapperton's return to England from his first expedition,* the name of Bello—Prince of the Faithful—became famous in Europe, though this popularity soon waned when news arrived of the manner in which he had treated his old English friend on his second visit. Knowing all the circumstances of the case, and that Clapperton was conveying presents from Great Britain to the Sultan of Bornu—Bello's most hated rival and foe—we cannot wonder at his acting as he did; and the fact still remains that Bello, whatever his shortcomings, must, as Barth says, "rank high among the African princes," while certain it is that, since his death, Sokoto has had no ruler to equal him. Othman—the Fulah Mahdi—had carried his proselytising hordes through the country, and founded a new empire, but to his son Bello fell the task of consolidating the empire by

Alihu Keremi, son of Bello (1862-3); Abu Bekr, son of Bello (1863-8); Amadu Rufai, son of Sheik Osman, son of Bello (1868-1873); Mazu, or Diabolu, son of Bello (1874-1879); Omoru, son of Bello (1879-1891); and Abdurrehman, son of Abu Bekr, who came to the throne in March, 1891. Abdurrehman succeeded because the issue of his father's elder brothers had failed; he is now an old man, having been born about 1820.

* *Vide* Chapter II.

the subjugation of the scores of pagan tribes to whom Islam had only appealed in a half-hearted manner.

The greater part of Bello's sultanate consisted of the old Hausa States,* whose people have always been, and are to this day, the merchants of the Western Sudan. When the Reformer Othman commenced his conquests, the Hausas had been in undisputed possession of their various States for many centuries; they were for the most part pagans,† though their rulers were generally Mohammedans, who, from long intercourse with Arabs and various Saharan tribes, had acquired sufficient enlightenment to administer the government of their countries with a certain amount of method and intelligence. Some writers affirm that the Hausas were not indigenous; but, like the Bornus, Borgus, Fulahs, and others, had emigrated, at some remote period, from the north, and proofs of this are said to exist in their language.‡ To the British public the name Hausa is nowadays familiar enough, chiefly in connection with the word constabulary. Yet little is known of the origin of the West Coast soldier, or of his country, although for some years there has been established in England the "Hausa Association,"§ with

* Barth tells us that the town of Biram (between Kano and Hadejah or Khadeja) is the oldest seat of the Hausa people. "Biram, Daura, Gober, Kano, Rano, Katsena, and Zegzeg are the well-known original seven Hausa States, the 'Hausa bokkoi' (the seven Hausa), while seven other provinces or countries, in which the Hausa language has spread to a great extent, although it is not the language of the aboriginal inhabitants, are called jocosely 'banza bokkoi' (the upstart or illegitimate); these are Zanfara, Kebbi, Nupé, or Nyffi, Gwari, Yauri, Yoruba, or Yariba, and Kororofa.

† Mohammedanism had, by the seventeenth century, made rapid advances into Hausaland from Bornu and the north.

‡ Modern authorities maintain that the Hausa language is closely connected with the Semitic languages, and that it is more spoken than any language in Africa. It has been a written language (Arabic characters) for upwards of a hundred years.

§ For promoting the study of the Hausa language and people; founded in memory of the Rev. J. A. Robinson, M.A., late scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge, who died at his work, in the employment of the C.M.S., at Lokoja, Niger Territories, on the 25th June, 1891.

a Lecturer in Hausa at the University of Cambridge.* The situation is a peculiar one; the Hausa States are now nominally part and parcel of the Fulah Empire, but the conquered race still remains morally superior in many ways to its conquerors; Hausa, not Fulah, is the *lingua franca* of the Western Sudan and far into the neighbouring regions;† the trade of the country is practically in the hands of the Hausas; Hausas are among our most trusty soldiers in West Africa, and it has been estimated that 1 per cent, of the whole population of the world are Hausas. Why, then, it may well be asked, has the very name Hausa disappeared from modern maps of Africa? The reason is that cartographers have thought it necessary to keep pace with the times, and swamp Hausaland by Sokoto, which they appear to regard as a species of German Empire. Time alone will show which survives the other, whether the Hausa or the Fulah.‡

As far as we are concerned the name matters little, for we have gone farther even than the cartographers, and have comprised in the one term "Northern Nigeria" Hausa, Fulah, Sokoto, and a dozen other names. By Fulah Empire—which heads the present chapter—we imply all the States acquired by the great Othman Dan

* The Rev. C. Robinson, author of "Hausaland" (1896), who claims that the Hausas are "superior intellectually and physically to all other natives of Equatorial Africa."

† The Court language at Sokoto, or rather Wurno, is Hausa, but in provincial capitals it is Fulah.

‡ In the Nupé Expedition of 1897 *six hundred* Hausas (led by British officers) defeated *thirty thousand* Fulahs! Mr. William Wallace, C.M.G., formerly Agent-General of the Royal Niger Company, and now Deputy-High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria, says: "It should be clearly understood that the Fulahs, who originally conquered the Hausa States by their military superiority and the advantage that horsemen have over undisciplined foot soldiers in a level and scantily wooded country, now hold their vast Empire of Sokoto through the superstitious dread which they have managed to instil into the Hausas. If it were not for the fear of the Fulah prayers calling down curses on them, the Hausas would at once struggle for their independence."—"Geographical Journal," Vol. VIII., page 216, 1896.

Fodio, the people of which have never been able to regain their independence, and such parts as have since been tacked on either to Sokoto or to Gando. Summarising the principal States or provinces as now existing, we find them to be as follows:—*Tributary to Sokoto*: Adamawa, Muri (Hamaruwa), Bautshi (Yakoba),* Kano, Katsena, Kontagora, Gober, Kazori, Kebbi, Zanzfara, Daura, Bakundi, Zaria (Zozo, or Zegzeg), and Nassarawa. *Tributary to Gando*:—Nupé, Yoruba (Ilorin), and Lafia.† But it must be remembered that some of these provinces have an intermediate suzerain, and may, perhaps, be ranked as second-class Sokoto provinces; such, for example, are Nassarawa, paying tribute to Zaria, and Bakundi, owing allegiance to Muri. Moreover, Gando itself acknowledges the spiritual and temporal superiority of Sokoto, and the Emir-el-Mumenin (as the Sultan of Sokoto is styled) considers that Gando and its dependencies are as much his vassals as are any other of the provinces of the empire.

It will be interesting, perhaps, to give a sketch of the native administration of the Sokoto Empire, showing the method adopted by the Sultan for ensuring the good government of his dominions. In the first place, each province is placed in charge of an emir (of course, a Fulah), who is virtually sovereign of a small kingdom. The office is hereditary, but an emir can be deposed at the will of the sultan, though, as a matter of fact, this extreme measure is seldom resorted to. Secondly, the several provinces are grouped into districts, each of which has a special overseer or inspector, appointed by the sultan. Of these there are at present (or were quite recently) four, viz. the Ghaladima, in charge of Katsena, Kazori, Magazingara (neighbourhood of Magami N'Didi), and Kebbi; the Saraki N'Kebbi, supervising the administration of Sokoto and Wurno; the Sariki N'Saffara,‡

* Also called Garim Bautshi.

† In the event of war, Sokoto can call on all or any of its provinces to furnish a contingent and defray expenses.

‡ Son of the sultan.

in charge of Zanfara and Daura; and the Wuzir,* who is responsible for Kano, Zaria, and Adamawa. These officials have to make inspection of their districts (which must be visited once a year, if not more often) with the principal objects of inquiring into matters of state, settling disputes, and seeing that the annual tribute (chiefly slaves) is forthcoming. In the case of the Wuzir's district, which extends for a distance of 700 or 800 miles from the capital, a deputy-inspector† is responsible for Muri and Adamawa, and his tour occupies six months of the year. As regards the actual administration of a province, the emir may be considered to be an autocrat, with powers of life and death, though in the better-organised States (such as Kano) there is an *alkali* or judge, who tries minor offences.‡ Besides the *alkali* there are several high officials, such as the Ghaladima, or prime minister, the master of the horse, the commander-in-chief, the master of the oxen (quarter-master-general), the lord of the treasury,§ and the chief of the slaves, who form a sort of ministerial council. The revenue is derived from taxes on each head of a family, on each hoe used in cultivation, each dyeing pot, on palm trees, on slaves, vegetables, etc., sold in the market, as well as from various duties levied on traders coming into the province.

In the more remote parts of the empire, such as Adamawa and Muri, the government is not by any means so well organised as in the Hausa provinces of Sokoto, Gando, or Kano; the emirs are left more to their own devices, and being aware that their liege lord would think

* "Owing to the seclusion in which the Sultan of Sokoto lives—somewhat similar to that of the Mikado of Japan in former days—the grand vizier practically rules the whole Fula Empire."—W. Wallace.

† For many years Bandawaki, chief of Gandi, son-in-law of the Wuzir, and brother of the Sultan Abdurrehman.

‡ Punishments, as a rule, are summary, there being no prisons except at the capital. The principal punishments are death (by the sword), slavery, and mutilation of hands or feet.

§ The office is never allowed to be held by a member of the Royal Family, from fear of peculation.

twice before sending a punitive expedition so far afield, they do pretty much as they please, so long as they do not fail to pay their annual tribute regularly. It is in these non-Hausa provinces that the Fulah power has done most damage, since the emirs consider the pagan aborigines fair game for slave-raiding, with the result that the country, once fertile and populous, has been devastated. In dealing with the more important of the Fulah provinces, we will commence with those which lie furthest from the capital of the Empire, and gradually work from east to west. Adamawa, the easternmost kingdom, over which the Fulahs pretend to hold sway, is situated in the upper reaches of the Benué river, and mainly on its southern or left bank. The greater part of the country is within the German sphere of influence (1886), though Yola, the capital, is included in the British sphere, and consequently forms part of Nigeria. It was, doubtless, a somewhat faulty arrangement which sanctioned this partition of the kingdom, though little trouble is likely to arise from it, as German Adamawa is held by the emir with a very light grasp, and is probably nothing more than a slaving preserve for the Yola chiefs.

Adamawa is the name applied by the Fulahs to that portion of the old pagan kingdom of Fumbina which was conquered by one Mallam Adama, during the Fulah invasion, and until visited by Barth, in 1851, was unknown to Europeans. We mentioned, when describing that traveller's visit to Yola, that, as he came from Bornu, he was inhospitably received by the emir, and was obliged to quit the town after a stay of only a few hours. No further attempt was made to reach Adamawa until 1880, when members of the Church Missionary Society ascended the Benué in a launch, and sought an audience of the Emir of Yola, who, however, refused to see them. Two years later the German explorer Flegel reached Yola and interviewed the emir, but was soon ordered to leave the country. In 1883, Mr. William Wallace (National African Company) conveyed numerous presents to the emir, who received him graciously, and granted him

permission to trade in the country. A trading hulk was accordingly towed up to Yola, but in the meanwhile the emir appears to have repented of his good nature, and to have ordered the hulk away. The Company then commenced trading higher up the river, at Bubanjidda* and Ribago, and letters having been obtained from the Sultan of Sokoto, the Company was promised protection by the emir, though it was some years before he would permit trade to be reopened at Yola itself. In 1889 Dr. Zintgraff made an overland journey from the Cameroons to Yola, but the emir refused him an audience and ordered him away; in the same year Major Claude MacDonald, Her Majesty's Commissioner, though received in a friendly manner by the Yerima (the heir-apparent), failed to see the emir himself.† From that time, though occasional attempts were made by French explorers‡ to stir up strife between the emir and the British trading company, the latter established itself in the country with political and commercial treaties—always, however, liable to be repudiated by the fickle emir.

With its headquarters at so great a distance from this outlying province, it was difficult for the Company to make its presence felt by force of arms, and the emir, aware of the inability of the Company to denude the rest of Nigeria of troops, at all times treated the British traders with a very high hand. Neither did Emir Zuberu's tone improve after he had been informed that the British Government had taken over the administration of the country; and so defiant did he become in 1900 that it was decided to despatch an expedition to Yola at the first opportunity.

The Adamawa country adjacent to the Benué is well irrigated and extremely fertile, and, had its pagan inhabitants ever been permitted a degree of freedom, much

* Now in German territory.

† *Vide* "Up the Niger : Narrative of Major Claude MacDonald's Mission to the Niger and Benué Rivers," 1892:

‡ Notably M. Mizon.

might have been done in the way of agriculture. Ranges of hills extend in all directions from the river, attaining a considerable elevation above the general level of the land, which is itself 1,000 or 1,500 feet above the sea. Amongst these mountains the last remnant of the free pagan aborigines have their strongholds, whence they issue forth to raid the Hausa ivory caravans, and defy the hated Mohammedans. Yola, the capital, is the most important town of this part of Northern Nigeria, and stands at a distance of about three miles inland from the river, though in the wet season the floods extend almost up to the town, which may then be reached in canoes. Between the steamer-anchorage and Yola there is a ridge 300 or 400 feet in height, studded with flourishing farms, and from the summit of this the first view of Adamawa's capital is obtained. At a distance there is little to be seen of the town itself, whose conical straw-roofed huts lie hidden among numerous magnificent trees; yet on closer acquaintance one finds that it covers a considerable area. The sandy nature of the soil on which it stands gives it a clean and neat appearance; narrow winding lanes run in all directions between the matting enclosures of the various family compounds, wherein are little circular huts and a certain amount of cultivation, well shaded by trees; while in the central part of the town high mud walls enclose the residences of the emir and his chief officials, who live a life of privacy befitting their dignity. Commercially Yola is unimportant; it has no industries, and slaves and ivory form the principal trade of the place.* Perhaps nowhere in Africa has slave-raiding been carried on to such an extent as in Adamawa, for the principal reasons, as we shall mention when dealing with the subject of slavery, that the distance of Yola from the various trade centres necessitates enormous numbers of carriers to transport ivory and other goods,†

* Most of the ivory comes from the great ivory markets of Banyo and Ngaundere, in German Adamawa. Elephants still abound in all the countries south of the Benué, as well as to the south of Lake Chad.

† Camels are rarely met with as far south as this.



Photo: Mr. G. F. Pucker.

NATIVE OF NIGERIA FISHING.



Photo: A. F. Mockler-Ferryman.

IBI, BENUÉ RIVER HEADQUARTERS.

and that the annual tribute to Sokoto has hitherto consisted of no less than 10,000 slaves.

Every endeavour was made by the Government of Northern Nigeria to induce the emir of Yola to friendship, but without avail; and in 1901 it was found necessary to remonstrate with him on his general bearing towards traders and on his slave-raiding propensities. The letter of remonstrance was returned unopened, which was considered equivalent to an ultimatum, and, on the 26th August, 1901, the troops destined for the punitive expedition embarked at Lokoja. The time of year was favourable, the Benué river being at its highest, and within a week the 500 miles had been covered, and the force* had effected a landing at a spot barely a quarter of a mile from Yola. Attempts were now made to open up negotiations, but the emir replied that he intended to fight. Soon after this the enemy appeared in strength (cavalry and infantry), and made an attack on the British square, but were received with such a galling fire that they immediately retired into the town. The guns now opened fire on the emir's palace, and were replied to by a couple of badly aimed shots from the emir's guns; but it was thought useless to waste more ammunition, and the troops forthwith advanced and entered the town (which is unwallled), meeting with little resistance until the palace walls were reached. Here the fighting became desperate; the enemy's guns fired at thirty yards range, and the riflemen and bowmen did a certain amount of execution. The British officers led the charge and captured the guns; and, in face of a heavy rifle fire, the sole entrance to the enclosure was stormed and carried. The emir and his men fled through a hole in the rear wall, and made good their escape, though the majority of the defenders surrendered later in the day. Eventually the palace was blown up, and the town having capitulated, the emir's brother, Bobo Amadu, was proclaimed emir, and swore allegiance. The British loss was 2 men killed and 2 officers and 37

* Strength, 14 European officers, 7 European N.C.O.'s, 2 doctors, 360 native rank and file, 2 75-m.m. guns, and 4 Maxim guns.

men wounded, while the enemy lost about 150 killed and wounded. Among the munitions of war captured were two French 9-pounder guns, 105 fused shells, 60 French rifles with cartridges, and a ton of gunpowder, all of which had doubtless been supplied to the emir by M. Mizon.* A week later the expedition re-embarked, a strong garrison remaining to uphold British authority.

The northern boundaries of Adamawa adjoin Bornu, while, westward, several wild pagan tribes separate it from the Fulah provinces of Muri and Bakundi, the former mostly on the north, the latter entirely on the south bank of the Benué. Bakundi is quite a modern province (if, indeed, it may be termed a province at all), having been founded barely thirty years ago by the then Emir of Muri, who, having been deposed by Sokoto, crossed the river and carved out a new kingdom for himself by the conquest of the pagan inhabitants. The founder of Bakundi was Baruba, whose brother, Mohammed Ynah, succeeded him as Emir of Muri, and, practically, Baruba's deposition resulted in the strengthening of the Muri province, since the two brothers (curiously enough) always remained on friendly terms, and worked together to increase the Fulah influence on both banks of the Benué. The town of Bakundi is situated about thirty-five miles up the Tarabba River (which flows into the Benué from the south-east) and within a short distance of the Anglo-German boundary. It is similar in construction to Yola, and said to contain 5,000 inhabitants, of whom perhaps 1,000 are fighting men. Beyond the fact of its being the capital of the province, Bakundi is of no great importance; it is not on a main trade route, and the unsettled state of the country has diverted elsewhere even the small trade which was at one time carried on in ivory.

Muri, the sister (or rather the parent) kingdom, is second only in importance, as a Benué Mohammedan country, to Adamawa. Its principal town, of the same

* See Chapter XIII;

name,* stands about fifteen miles from the great river, on a spur of the Muri mountains, and was formerly known as Hamaruwa.† Baikie (1854) was the first white man to visit it, and he was received by the Emir Mohamma with every mark of respect. The town is much frequented by Hausa caravans, passing from such northern towns as Sokoto, Kano, and Bautshi to Yola, the merchants from the Hausa country bringing tobies, cloth, and Mediterranean goods to exchange for slaves and ivory.

The next Fulah province is Bautshi,‡ which extends from the Benué northwards to the borders of Kano, lying wedged in between Muri and Zaria, though several small pagan tribes still exist in the neighbourhood of the Benué. The capital Bautshi, or Yakoba (Garo N'Bautshi)§ is situated in a direct line between the towns of Muri and Kano, on the watershed of the Benué and Middle Niger, and at a height of 3,000 feet above the sea. It is surrounded and commanded by lofty mountains, from which flow down on all sides numerous streams and rivers, watering a most fertile country; while the plateau whereon

* Called Kundi by the Jukos. Bakundi is possibly a contraction of Baruba Kundi.

† "It commands a fine and extensive view. The river is seen stretching along like a narrow strip of white cloth, between the shades of light green grass, which fringes the water's edge, and a little farther back is the darker green of trees, and then the blue ranges of Fumbina with the lofty Mauranu mountain in Adamawa, on the left, and the Muri Mountains in Hamaruwa, with their many fanciful peaks, on the right side, each at a distance of twelve miles from the river. In the valleys below the town from one to two hundred cattle were feeding, and this gave life to the scenery."—*Crowther's Journal*, 1855.

‡ The Bolobolo and Bolewa of Barth.

§ Edward Vogel, accompanied by Corporal Maguire, R.E., it will be remembered, travelled from Bornu to Yakoba, in 1854, after parting with Barth. No record, however, remains of their travels. *Vide* page 47 (footnote). Reclus suggests that Yakoba derived its name either from its Fulah founder, Jakob (Jacob), or from the neighbouring pagan Yako tribe. Nowadays the town is always called Bautshi (or Bauchi), though the name Yakoba is known to the natives.

the town is built is remarkable for its excellent climate. Within the hardened mud walls and ditch* which encircle the place is the usual Fulah arrangement of walled and mat-enclosed compounds, Hausa huts, patches of cultivation, and labyrinthine lanes, with here and there a swamp or a rocky mount. In size Bautshi rivals Kano (the number of its inhabitants were estimated by Rohlf's in 1866 at 150,000),† and its importance is altogether due to its being a meeting-place of several caravan routes, for it produces nothing of itself, except perhaps a few ostriches, horses, sheep, and cattle, a little rubber, iron, and tin (from Mount Jerende). The market is good, and well stocked with Manchester goods and the like.

Early in 1902, Emir Omoru (an inveterate slave-raider), was deposed, and Cheroma was installed as emir of Bautshi. He will be supported by a British Resident and an Imperial garrison.

Better known than Bautshi is Zaria,‡ which adjoins it on the west, and which comprises all that tract of country which is situated between Bautshi and Nupé, and between the Benué and Kano. This, however, is only a rough description of its boundaries, and it would be more accurate to say that over this area Zaria claims jurisdiction, though on the borders of the kingdom and among its mountains there are to be found many unsubdued pagan tribes, descendants of the original inhabitants. Still, Zaria is considered to be the largest of the Sokoto provinces, but not by any means the most valuable, for, commercially, Kano stands unrivalled. In Zaria is included the secondary State of Nassarawa, which, although tributary to the larger province, has of recent years grown into importance, principally because of its intercourse with the Royal Niger

* The perimeter is $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles. There are nine gateways, with doors of palm-wood and sheet iron $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. From the top of the wall to the bottom of the ditch is 24 feet.

† The population has decreased considerably, and is now not more than 30,000.

‡ Also known as Zozo and Zegzeg.

Company. Its chief town* lies some few miles north of the Benué, but in Loko it possesses a port which, until quite recently, served the double purpose of a trading-station and a base of operations for slaving expeditions to the south of the river. Now the slave-raiding is held in check by a small Imperial garrison.

On the direct route between Nassarawa and Zaria, the capital of the province, there is but one town of any size, viz. Kaffi (or Keffi), which is remarkable only for its slave market. Thence to Zaria, a distance of about 180 miles, the country gradually rises until it attains a level of 2,500 feet above the sea, its fertility everywhere being beyond dispute. It is watered by several rivers and their tributaries, the principal being the Kaduna, which, after flowing in a south-westerly direction, eventually passes Bida and empties itself into the Middle Niger at a point some fifty miles above Egga.

The town of Zaria is ten miles in circumference, but within its walls (40 feet high, and crenellated) perhaps as much as half the space consists of cultivation, and the population does not exceed 30,000, though Standiger (1886) puts it at 50,000 to 100,000. It possesses what is considered the finest mosque in Nigeria, and a large market place, where considerable business is transacted, and in more legitimate articles than at the towns which we have hitherto been discussing, though it cannot be denied that the traffic in slaves surpasses everything else.† Still, Zaria, being within 150 miles of Kano—the great emporium of the Western and Central Sudan—and on the direct route to Nupé, Yoruba, and various other places, receives and exchanges a great amount of native and imported goods and produce. Good horses are to be found on sale (15s. to £6), as well as well-tanned leather,

* Nassarawa, a red mud-walled town, said to contain 10,000 inhabitants; about fifty miles from the Benué, and 550 feet above the sea. The tribal mark of the pagan inhabitants of this part of the country is a scar beneath each eye.

† Mr. C. Robinson (1894) saw 300 slaves exposed in the market on one occasion.

beautifully carved calabashes, tobies, Kano cotton cloth, kola nuts, tobacco, and the various necessities and luxuries of life.

We now come to the most important of all the Fulah States—the centre of Hausaland—whose capital, Kano, we have already had frequent occasion to mention. Even before the Fulahs commenced to assert themselves, Kano had become,* under its Hausa rulers, the metropolis of West Africa, and such it has remained to this day; it is worthy, therefore, of a somewhat fuller account than space has permitted us to devote to the other provincial capitals.

The early history of Kano is that of the Hausas, though it seems doubtful if until the sixteenth century the present capital was anything more than an ordinary fort.† At that period Bornu was the principal Central African kingdom, and claimed jurisdiction over Kano, a fact which was, however, disputed by the King of Kororofa, or Juko‡ (on the Benué), which appears to have been almost as powerful a kingdom as Bornu. The traditions of Kano go back about 1,000 years, when, it is said, some Hausa people came from Daura (three days north of Kano), and, under one Kano, founded the town. Kano himself was a pagan, and twenty-four pagan kings succeeded him; then followed Mahomed Rumfra, then six pagan kings, after whom none but Mohammedans have reigned (since 1802 Fulahs). To come down to more modern times,§ Kano has of late years been in considerable trouble. In 1892 the Emir Bello|| died, and was succeeded by Tukr, whose harshness soon stirred up insurrection. Isufu

* Kano owed its prosperity to the downfall of Katsena, which, prior to the Fulah invasion, was the chief commercial town of these parts.

† Dala, a rocky hill now enclosed within the town walls.

‡ Southern capital Wukari, northern capital Gatarì; the Jukos are still pagans, and inhabit the country at the back of Ibi, to the south of the Benué River, as well as a portion of the country to the north of the Benué.

§ In Clapperton's time Mohammed Dabo was emir; in Barth's, Othman.

|| Not to be confounded with the great Sultan Bello.

came forward to head a rebellion, and with little resistance captured Kano, driving Tukr to Katsena, and proclaiming himself emir. His reign, however, was short, and on his death his brother, Baba, came to the throne.* In the meanwhile Tukr had sought the assistance of Sokoto, who ordered the people of Kano to acknowledge him as their ruler; this they refused to do, and in the course of time Sokoto relented and agreed to allow Baba to hold the emirship, on condition that the usual tribute was paid. Tukr made strenuous efforts to regain his lost kingdom, but in March, 1895, he was slain in battle, though not before he had given considerable trouble to Emir Baba.†

The walls of the city of Kano are of sun-hardened mud, twenty or thirty feet in height and fifteen miles in circumference, with thirteen gates, besides a watergate to let out the floods, which are often of considerable extent. It is probably due to the amount of stagnant water found in different parts of the town that Kano has a reputation for unhealthiness; otherwise its situation, nearly 1,500 feet above the sea, should make its climate everything that is desirable. As matters are, however, numerous swamps and morasses are met with within the walls, and the holes from which the material for the latter has been obtained are allowed to remain filled with water and the refuse of the town. But sanitation is in no African town a strong point; it is, therefore, wisest for the

* With regard to Baba's accession, the natives of Kano relate the following story: When Isufu was dying, he told the numerous princes assembled at his bedside that in the next room there was some small thing that he required, and that whoever brought it to him would be emir. All went to look for it; and on their return, Baba was discovered to have found it.

† Tukr was expelled from Katsena, where he had taken refuge, and went to Kamri. Baba attacked and destroyed Kamri, enslaving all the inhabitants, even Mohammedans. Though possessing great personal energy, this emir is not a popular ruler, the natives considering him unjust. He is not friendly to Europeans, and will probably resist British interference; but it is doubtful if even his Fulah followers will fight for him.

traveller not to inquire too searchingly into details. As to the general arrangement of Kano,* less than half of the enclosed space is inhabited, the remainder consisting of a certain proportion of waste land, but principally of cultivation—in fact, it is estimated that Kano, if besieged, could never be reduced by starvation. The town itself—that is the inhabited area of the great enclosure—lies to the southwards, the southern wall being the only one which actually adjoins the dwellings. Within it there are several distinct quarters,† though practically it may be divided into two parts, separated by the sheet of water called Jakara, which stretches from east to west almost throughout the width of the town. North of Jakara dwell the Hausas and most of the Arabs that have settled in the place, the houses of the latter being generally somewhat pretentious in appearance, with flat roofs and verandahs, while the Hausas and Fulahs (who live to the south of Jakara) are content with their compounds and circular huts. The great market-place is in the Hausa division of the town, abutting on the Jakara lake, and probably in no part of Africa does one see a stranger gathering of people or a more heterogeneous selection of merchandise‡ than here. The sumptuously apparelled Arab

* Clapperton found the latitude of Kano (by observation) to be $12^{\circ} 0' 19''$ N.; the longitude (by dead reckoning from Kuka), $9^{\circ} 20'$ E. Robinson fixed the longitude by observation, $8^{\circ} 29' 15''$ E.

† The oldest quarter is Dala, close to the hill of the same name, and from a commercial point the most important. Barth mentions twenty-two other Hausa quarters and no less than forty-five Fulah quarters; of the latter, that containing the royal residence is known as Yola, “which has given its name to the new capital of Adamawa (the natives of Negroland being not less anxious than Europeans to familiarise the new regions which they colonise by names taken from their ancient homes).” The fixed population of Kano is about 50,000, and Monteil says that upwards of two millions of natives (traders and others) pass through the town in the year.

‡ Articles on sale in the Kano market: Slaves, camels, horses, asses, cattle, natron, leather-work, tobies, turbans, cotton-cloth, tanned hides, silk, kola-nuts, salt, ivory, ostrich feathers, sugar, Manchester goods, beads, paper, needles, sword blades, razors, spices, copper, and every variety of provision. Of European goods

is to be found bartering with the almost naked pagan ; Tuaregs of the Sahara are intent on a deal with merchants from Borgu or Wadai ; Yorubas, Nupés, Benué tribesmen, Baghirmis, and countless other people are represented, and all with one idea—the exchange of their merchandise on as favourable terms as possible. This is no ordinary Eastern bazaar, and when we say that in the *kaswa* (market) each day there are no less than 30,000 people, it can be imagined what an amount of business is transacted.

But it is not the market alone which makes Kano prosperous, for the place is a great industrial centre, celebrated throughout West Africa for its cotton cloth and leather. The former is woven in long, narrow strips, a few inches wide, and generally dyed with indigo, which grows everywhere in the country, the strips being made up neatly into tobes and other garments. So famous is this Kano cloth that the natives of the Sudan will have no other, and it is conveyed by the merchants to all parts—even to Lagos on the south and to the shores of the Mediterranean. The leather also is an important article of commerce, being excellently tanned, and much used for a variety of purposes ; the skins of goats and sheep, which are usually dyed red, are exported far and wide, and the softness of the leather (produced by a lengthy process of manipulation) makes it invaluable for such things as slippers, bags, and coverings for boxes—in fact, a great quantity of it passes into North Africa, and is nothing more nor less than the Morocco leather of commerce. The peculiar thing about these Kano industries is that the place contains no big factories, and there is nothing to show that it is a manufacturing town, all the weaving and tanning being carried on in the homes of the working classes. Besides these there are many minor industries, which, however, it is not necessary now to touch on ; we have said enough to show that travellers

it is said that 12,000 camel-loads are brought annually to Kano from the Mediterranean. All important purchases are conducted through a broker, who gets a commission of about five per cent. ; the more valuable articles are not exposed for sale, but disposed of privately.

have not exaggerated the importance of Kano when describing it as "the most famous market in all Tropical Africa," "the London and the Manchester of the Sudan." It is perhaps needless to mention that the Hausas are responsible for the state of prosperity at which Kano has arrived; they alone furnish the industrial class and the merchants, the Fulahs preferring the excitements of slave-raiding—always a most lucrative employment. These raids are directed against the small pagan villages in the neighbourhood of the town, and the Mohammedan Hausas are not molested, the ruling class being clever enough to understand their value. The Fulahs, however, regard the Hausas (although of the same religion as themselves) as an inferior race, which is only natural, considering the ease with which the country was conquered.

In the neighbourhood of the capital and for a distance of even eighty to a hundred miles in all directions is a perfect garden, and nothing strikes the traveller to Kano so much as this vast expanse of cultivation. Whether he approaches the great city from the north, south, east, or west, the same sight greets him; hitherto he has seen nothing like it in Africa, for the most fertile lands in other parts are mere patches of cultivation compared with the province of Kano. Acres of Guinea corn are succeeded by acres of Indian corn, wheat, rice, or other cereals; then follows a stretch of cotton and millet, the two sown together in alternate rows, so that the latter may protect the former when young from the fierce rays of the sun; here is a field of indigo, there a plantation of cassava (manioc), or of ground-nuts; while beyond again is a veritable kitchen garden well stocked with peas, beans, bananas, sweet potatoes, onions, and every variety of vegetable and herb. All these crops are produced with little actual labour beyond sowing and reaping; the hoe is the only agricultural implement, and the soil is hardly turned and never dressed, the rest being left to Nature. Valuable trees also stand scattered among the corn fields, and from them the farmer obtains, simply for the gathering,

many saleable articles. Such are the shea-butter tree, the locust, the gambier, the tamarind, the baobab, and a species of plum-tree. Silkworms feed on the tamarind leaves, and bees in great quantities nest in the trees near the villages, being carefully preserved for the sake of their honey and wax ; while the pastoral tribes possess large herds and flocks. It is a land of plenty, a land literally flowing with milk and honey, though the rose cannot be said to be without its thorn even here ; for the slave-raider is ever ready to pounce down on the pagan cultivator, and rob him of his hard-earned gains, if not also of his liberty. The day of reckoning is, however, at hand, and now that the British Government has become directly responsible for the welfare of the country, we may be sure that strong measures will be taken to put an end to all Fulah oppression.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FULAH EMPIRE (*continued*).

The Provinces of Katsena and Zanfara—The City of Sokoto—
The City of Wurno—The Gando Division of the Fulah Empire
—Nupé—The Nupé Native—His Handicrafts—His Happy
Temperament—Bida and Rabba—Ilorin—Contrast with Nupé
—The Ilorins.

BETWEEN the towns of Kano and Sokoto lie two once-important provinces, viz. Katsena and Zanfara (or Samfara), though neither now to be compared with Kano, which, as we said above, reaped the advantage of Katsena's decline. The reason of this decline was the invasion of the Fulahs; for, prior to 1807, the capital of Katsena was the great commercial *entrepôt* of the Sudan. The Hausas of Katsena resisted fiercely, and for seven years succeeded in maintaining their independence; only at length, however, to be starved into submission by their Fulah enemies. These seven years of continuous warfare, followed by a further lengthy period of unrest, drove away all the Arab merchants, and diverted the northern trade to the more inland town of Kano; and Katsena has never been able to recover its position. The town itself, though sparsely inhabited,* is surrounded by a solid wall, forming almost a perfect square of sides three miles in length, and having eight gateways; its appearance is that of desolation; for, with the exception of about a square mile in the north-east corner, nearly the whole of the vast enclosed space is an abandoned waste. The

* The small amount of trade still carried on with the outside world is almost entirely in the direction of Nupé, to which there is a good camel route. Katsena has a reputation as a seat of learning, and Hausa in its purest form is there spoken.

country surrounding the town also shows signs of the unfortunate state of affairs ; for the still unsubdued Hausas of Gober and Maradi are constantly planning warlike excursions with the object of regaining from the Fulahs the kingdoms which they have conquered. The villages are few and far between, and generally strongly fortified ; cultivation is scanty ; and the people everywhere live in terror of the numerous bands of robbers.

Zanfara (or Samfara), the province which adjoins Katsena on the west, extends northwards to Gober, and suffers also at the hands of the Goberis and Maradis. It possesses no actual capital, the people of the old capital, Zurmi, having rebelled against their Fulah masters soon after the death of Othman the Reformer, since which time the Sultan has considered it advisable to keep the province under his direct supervision. Governors are appointed to the principal towns, and the Sariki N'Saffara (at present the eldest son of the Sultan) is responsible that they do not become disaffected. Like Katsena, the country is now depopulated, and in all directions are to be seen the ruins of towns and villages, and a wasted land—a condition of things which is the more remarkable when we consider that Zanfara is the nearest province to the capital of the empire.

About the minor Sokoto provinces, such as Kebbi, Daura, Gober, and Kontagora,* there is nothing of particular interest to relate ; we will therefore pass to the capital (or rather capitals) of the great Sultan el Mumenin. The city of Sokoto, as the reader will remember, was founded by Othman Dan Fodio, who had previously established himself at Gando and at Sifawa,† neither of which

* A portion of Kebbi belongs to Gando. The capital of Daura lies about 100 miles north-east of the town of Katsena, and was once a flourishing Hausa town, where, tradition says, resided Dodo, the chief Hausa deity ; Gober is situated between Sokoto and the Sahara. Kontagora is about sixty miles from the left bank of the Middle Niger, and has now a British Resident, with escort ; it is a well-built and clean town, with a handsome mosque.

† Gando is about fifty-five miles south-west, Sifawa eighteen miles south, of Sokoto:

apparently pleased him. In eventually fixing on Sokoto, he was influenced by various considerations; the site had the advantage of high ground, the neighbourhood was well watered by a river* and its tributaries, and here the Sultan would be in a more central position for looking after the different provinces of his vast empire. Sokoto, therefore, became the capital, and remains such, in name at any rate, at present, though the Sultan and his court have for many years resided at the town of Wurno, twenty miles away. The walls built by Sultan Bello to protect his capital from the Goberis and others of the Hausas whom he and his father, the Jehadi, had only partially subdued, are twenty feet in height, and enclose a regular square, each side of which is 3,000 yards in length. As a further defence, Sokoto has a dry ditch outside the wall, and admittance to the city is obtained by eight gates, two on each side. In the days of Othman, the whole interior space was thickly populated—at one time 120,000 inhabitants; with the removal of the court to Wurno, however, the population rapidly decreased, and Barth (1853) estimated it at only 20,000. The high ground lies to the north of the city, and the market-place on a rocky slope in the north-east angle, while the former palace is situated at a short distance from the eastern gates. In the south-west corner of the city are the remains of a once-famous mosque, adjacent to which is the shrine of the great Othman, still visited by pious Fulah pilgrims, who regard it as a local Mecca. As a commercial town, Sokoto is of small account, though it is the rendezvous of merchants from all parts, and its markets often exhibit a fair stock of merchandise, the more important articles on sale being slaves, horses, cattle, iron, and leather articles.† Still, Sokoto as a great metropolis has ceased to exist; in fact, at the present day it is quite a minor town, remarkable as merely possessing

* The Mayo Kebbi (called by the Hausas Goulbi N'Kebbi, or Goulbi N'Sokoto). It enters the Middle Niger at a point opposite Gumba, about 100 miles above Boussa;

† Bridles and horse trappings, bags, cushions, and slippers;

the name by which the Empire is known, and as a place of pilgrimage.

Wurno, the real capital, was built, in 1831, by Sultan Atiku, who deemed it more suitable than Sokoto as a base of operations for holding in check the Goberis and Maradis. It is not by any means a large town, containing not more than 6,000 inhabitants, but as the seat of government it is of some consequence. It stands on a hill,* 150 feet or so above the surrounding country, and is barely three-quarters of a square mile in area; but it is considered far more healthy than Sokoto, which enjoys anything but a good reputation in this respect. In general shape it is a square, with sides of about 1,000 yards, though the north wall has been rounded off to accommodate itself to the configuration of the hill. Like Sokoto, each side has two gates,† a little distance outside which are the wells which supply the town with water, while on the west and north flow streams, draining into the Sokoto River (lower in its course known as the Mayo Kebbi). The residence of the Sultan—the Sariki N'Musulmya—is in the centre of the town, and the market place (with wall and ditch) is situated about half a mile without the south-west angle of the city wall. The appearance of Wurno differs in no way from other Fulah towns, there being, as usual, no streets, but merely a mass of enclosures containing circular mud huts with beehive-like thatched roofs, the whole well shaded by large and handsome trees. The place merits no lengthier description than we have bestowed on it, for as the capital of a most remarkable African Empire it is decidedly disappointing, and probably the only reason why the Sultan has never thought fit to transfer his court to Kano is the fear that by so doing the Goberis would be given an opportunity of driving home the wedge whose thin end has, for many years, been pushed

* Sandstone.

† It must not be imagined that the gates of a Fulah town are to be compared with, for instance, the Cashmere Gate at Delhi; they are incapable of resistance, and, being usually only openings in the wall, are practically the weak points.

well to the front. Gober is undoubtedly the weak spot in the Fulah Empire, which, considering that it was the State in which Othman commenced his *jehad*, is strange; yet, so far, no Sultan has been strong enough to reduce the Goberis to complete submission. The task is too extensive; since, if driven back, this border tribe has behind it the whole of the Sahara to retire into.

The above is a rough outline of the Sokoto division of the Fulah Empire; we must now concern ourselves with the Gando* division, in reality of far less importance, though as having within its limits two provinces which were a few years ago *en évidence*, not to be passed over. It will be remembered that, as stated in the last chapter, when Othman Dan Fodio had completed his conquests, he divided up the various provinces, and apportioned them to his son and nephew, the latter being proclaimed first Sultan of the Gando,† or western, half of the Fulah Empire, extending from the borders of Sokoto across the Middle Niger and as far south as Ilorin, or to what is now the northern boundary of the hinterland of Lagos Colony. Of this vast territory the Sultan is still the nominal ruler, and the vassal States continue to pay him tribute, though, as a matter of fact, his dominion over such provinces as Nupé and Ilorin is but lightly felt; moreover, he himself pays homage to his religious superior of Sokoto, and, being heavily subsidised, and under British protection, is, for all practical purposes, a servant of Great Britain, though, at the same time, some of his provinces are within the French sphere of influence.

* Barth (1853) enumerates the various provinces of Gando as follows: "The western half of Kebbi, Mauri or Arewa, Zaberma, Dendina (comprising Kenga-koy and Zagha), a great part of Gurma (comprising the provinces of Galaijo, Torode, Yagha, and Libtako), with a small portion of Borgu or Barba, a large portion of Yoruba with the capital Alori or Ilorin, and, on the east side of the river, the provinces of Yauri, and Nupé or Nyffi."

† Mahomed Ben Abdallah, the first Sultan of Gando, was succeeded by his brother, Mahomed Wani, after whom another brother, Khalilu, came to the throne (1836), and he it was whom Barth visited in his capital in 1853.

His capital is at Gando, a town situated about eighty miles from the Middle Niger, in a narrow valley (through which flows a tributary of the Sokoto River), and commanded on all sides by ranges of hills. It is of no very great size, but the land within the walls, being well irrigated and excessively fertile, is a mass of cultivation, and the dwellings of the people are almost entirely hidden by the wide-spreading trees and groves of bananas. For its fruits and vegetables* Gando is famed, and it is certainly a most picturesque spot, though its market is small, and there is nothing about the place to mark it as a capital of a great empire. Yet its neighbourhood bespeaks prosperity, for large farms and villages, surrounded by a considerable amount of cultivation, lie scattered in all directions, and the roads leading to Sokoto, Jega, and other large towns at all times present a busy scene. Like Sokoto, it is troubled by raiding bands of independent Hausas, and the villages and towns of the home province are continually subjected to the attacks of the Argungus and others, against whom Gando does not take anything like such strong measures as Sokoto.

Of the majority of the provinces tributary to Gando it will be sufficient here to mention merely the geographical situation, reserving a more lengthy description for the two great States of Nupé and Ilorin (Yoruba). Gando, the capital, is in Western Kebbi, the divided province, which also has the honour of including, within its eastern portion, the city of Sokoto. North of Kebbi, which comprises all the country between Sokoto and the Middle Niger, lies Mawri or Arewa; between Mawri and the Niger is Zaberma or Zerema, and wedged in between the last three provinces and the great river stretches Dendina, both the latter being now within the French sphere; while the riverside province of Yauri† separates Kebbi from

* Bananas, dates, paw-paws, the fruit of the dum or deleb palm, shea-butter, tamarind, onions, yams, peas, beans, etc.

† The people who murdered Mungo Park were natives of Yauri, opposite Boussa (or Bussa).

Nupé. Across the Niger, *i.e.* on its right bank, we have Gurma on the north, with Borgu* adjoining it on the south, and farther south still Ilorin or Northern Yoruba. The number of Europeans who have visited all or any of these inland Fulah (or Hausa) States can be almost counted on one's fingers. With Nupé matters are different, for it has held continuous intercourse with Englishmen for more than forty years, and Ilorin is no longer a *terra incognita*. Both are destined to play a great part in the future history of Northern Nigeria, if not also of Great Britain in Africa.

The earliest information about Nupé was that collected by Clapperton during his first expedition (1822-4), and consisted chiefly of Sultan Bello's description of the country, from which we learn that it was generally considered that the pagan Nupés† originally came from Katsena, Zaria, Kano, and other parts. The first European known to have reached Nupé was Hornemann,‡ but as he left no records of his travels, it was not until Clapperton undertook his second expedition (1825-7) that any authentic account of the country was forthcoming. Lander (1830) wrote fully of his experiences in Nupé, and, as it was the first Mohammedan kingdom met with by the subsequent Government expeditions, a considerable amount of historical information has been handed down by their chroniclers. Its story since the Fulah conquest is not unlike that of most of the other provinces of the Empire, though it has had the advantage of commercial intercourse with Europeans for a much longer period, and even if the pagan aborigines have not benefited thereby, it is certain that the power of the Mohammedan rulers has increased very considerably, so much so, in fact, that for many years past the jurisdiction of Gando over Nupé has greatly diminished.

* *Vide* Chapter X. Only a very small portion of Borgu is claimed by Gando, and even this claim is more than doubtful.

† The tribal marks of the Nupé pagans are three elliptical gashes from the temple to the mouth, and one horizontal gash across nose and cheeks.

‡ *Vide* page 10.

To understand anything of Nupé* politics, it is necessary to become acquainted with certain matters of history, though not of a period farther back than the beginning of the last century. After the country had fallen into the hands of the Fulahs civil wars were frequent, the pagans endeavouring to recover their country from their Muslim oppressors. About 1818, Nasa,† king of Nupé, died, when his son, Mamagia,‡ claimed the throne. A rival, however, arose in Jemata, the son of Nasa's eldest sister, and civil war broke out. Mamagia having obtained the assistance of the Fulahs, routed and killed Jemata, whose son, Ederesi,§ then took up his father's cause, and carried on the war. In 1826 Clapperton found the war in full progress, and Mamagia (or, as he calls him, Mahomed el Magia) getting the best of it, since his unbounded generosity won over the people to his side, and the superior fighting qualities of the Fulah horsemen, who aided him, easily defeated Ederesi's half-trained Nupé pagans. The war was, however, carried on for several years, until eventually, but not until 1841, matters were settled by the Fulahs, and the country was divided between Mamagia and Ederisi, both of whom were made vassals of Sumo,|| king of Rabba, a son of the famous Mallam Dendo (who died in 1842), and grandson of Sultan Bello. Mamagia's head-quarters were, with Sumo, at Rabba, while Ederisi resided near Egga, and, on the death

* Other names : Nufe, Nyfee, Nife, Nupaysee, Yufi, Anuperi, Yowi ; the Hausas call it Takpa, Tapua, Tapa, or Tacwa ; it is also sometimes known by the name of its capital, Bida.

† McWilliam (1841) calls him Musa, though probably erroneously. Musa, or Mallam Musa, was another name for Mallam Dendo.

‡ Magis, or Mamagia, a contraction of Mallam Magia. Lander says that Mamagia and Edrisa were brothers (the latter the elder), and that Edrisa actually succeeded his father, Nasa, and was acknowledged king by the nation. Mamagia rebelled, and obtained the aid of Bello, of Sokoto, when Edrisa was defeated and driven from Nupé.

§ Lander, Laird, and Oldfield call him Edrisa ; Schön says his name was Ezu Issa (*i.e.* King Issa), and that he was king of Barra:

|| Also known as Sumozaki, a contraction of Sumo sariki (Sumo the king), and as Osman, or Othman, Saki.

of both Mamagia and Ederisi, Sumo proclaimed himself emir of all Nupé.

History is ever repeating itself, and in these petty Mohammedan kingdoms the Koranic law of fraternal succession provides a never-ending cause for dynastic squabbles—the revolt of one brother against another. They are born of different mothers (very frequently of different tribes), and each imagines that, with the support of his mother's people, he will be able to gain the throne. Instances will be found in every Sudan State, and Nupé is no exception; we have already seen how the first two rulers acted, and on their death without heirs a similar state of affairs at once commenced. Sumo, the new emir of Nupé, was, as we have stated, a son of Mallam Dendo, who also had (by a Nupé wife) another son, named Dasaba or Masaba.* Now, before Sumo had been established by the Fulahs in Rabba, a quarrel had arisen between the half-brothers, the result of which was that Masaba fled to Ladi, on the southern bank of the Middle Niger. Here he gained great influence over the Nupés, principally owing to the fact that his mother was of their race, whereas Sumo was of Fulah parentage on both sides, and by 1845 matters were ripe for rebellion. Masaba attacked Rabba, defeated his brother (who fled into the Hausa country), sacked and burnt the town, and proclaimed himself Emir of Nupé, with his capital at Ladi. But the people who had assisted him soon discovered that they had made a mistake, for Masaba, once established on the throne, turned out to be cruel and tyrannical in all his dealings with them; consequently, in 1854, the country rose, and drove their king into exile, appointing Baziba, son of Mamagia, to be their ruler. Masaba went to Ilorin, where he was well received by the Fulahs, and in the course of a few months he persuaded the Nupés to receive him back. He now moved his court from Ladi to Rabba, which had grown up again to be a town of some size, and here he remained for the next few years.

* A contraction either of Mallam Saba or Mohammed Saba.

This brings us to the time when Baikie took up his consular appointment at Lokoja,* and it is due to Masaba to say that the goodwill which he showed towards the little British settlement was the means of firmly establishing our commercial position on the Niger, though probably the frequent presents which he received acted as an incentive to his friendship. As a ruler he was never popular among his own people, but he took the greatest interest in the white trader, and endeavoured to increase his own wealth and power in the land by commercial transactions. His capital was Rabba (on the left bank of the Middle Niger), a place which, from its situation, apparently fulfilled every requisite of the chief town of an important province;† whether Masaba disliked the town we are not told, but certain it is that, at the first opportunity, he lost no time in leaving it. The emir's commander-in-chief was one Omoru, who, after one of his periodical slaving expeditions, founded the town of Bida, and, being pleased with his choice of a site, persuaded his master to pay him a visit, the result of which was that Masaba proclaimed it his capital, and forthwith transferred his court to the spot.‡ Omoru was now in high favour, and as a reward for the founding of the new capital the emir ordained that he should succeed to the throne at his own death. This actually occurred in 1873, and Omoru reigned over Nupé until 1882, when he was succeeded by Maleké, a Masaba.

The elevation to the throne of Omoru, who was not even of royal descent, naturally created disaffection, and this extraordinary decree of Masaba has given rise to no small amount of trouble; for, not content with making Omoru emir, he made a further settlement as to the succession, viz. that after Omoru there should be successively

* *Vide* Chapter V.

† The tombs of the Nupé kings are still to be seen at Rabba.

‡ After Masaba had established himself at Bida, his treatment of his pagan subjects was so harsh that he was again driven from the throne. He then sought the aid of Sokoto and regained his position.

two Masaba emirs, then one Omoru emir, to be followed again by two Masabas, and so on. All this, in a country where intrigue is the very essence of life, produces a state of affairs frequently verging on civil war, though, fortunately, the presence of the Royal Niger Company and, more recently, of Imperial troops, has so far kept matters fairly straight.* Still, to the outsider Nupé politics are most confusing; the main points, however, to remember are that there are two factions: the descendants of the interloper Omoru and of the royal house of Masaba. Until recently there were always three grades of heirship to the throne, with distinct titles; thus the first heir was known as the Shiaba,† the second as the Prince Potun (both Masabas), and the third as the Markun‡ (the head of the house of Omoru). During the reign of Maleké, the first title ceased to exist, principally because the Omoru faction successively poisoned off anyone who filled it, and when Maleké died, in 1895, the Potun, Abu Bakri (or Bokhari), became emir.§ It was with this latter ruler that the Royal Niger Company settled accounts in 1897, and on his deposition the Markun, Mohammed (Omoru), was installed as emir (February 5th, 1897). Masaba's arrangement, therefore, was up till then carried out.

It was not long, however, before Abu Bakri returned, and, having driven out the Markun, proclaimed himself emir. As such he was recognised by the Royal Niger Company, whose troops were too fully occupied to embark on another Bida campaign. Early in 1900 Abu Bakri and his neighbour, the Emir of Kontagora, commenced an extensive slave-raiding campaign, and even went so far as to appeal to the Emir of Ilorin to join them in driving the British out of the country. Detachments of the West African Frontier Force were moved up to

* The emir Omoru was in danger of being dethroned in 1882, and that the rebellion was put down was entirely due to the National African Company, who supported Omoru with an armed force.

† Heir-apparent.

‡ Commander-in-Chief.

§ His three elder brothers had died.

protect the natives, pending the return of the troops from Ashanti; and when these arrived in December, Kontagora was first attacked and captured, after which attention was paid to Bida. Abu Bakri fled on the approach of the troops, and the Markun was reinstated as emir.

The actual limits of Nupé, until 1897, could not be at all distinctly defined. A slave-raid among the pagans added, for the time being, several hundreds of square miles to the emir's dominions, which, however, if not considered of value, were left alone. On the outskirts of the kingdom, therefore, there were vast tracts, of which the heathen population itself could scarcely say whether or not they were vassals of the Mohammedan ruler of Nupé. The only thing that they could truly affirm was that all Mohammedans were their bitterest foes, who, when opportunity offered, would raid their villages, even though they paid tribute to the emir. Roughly speaking, in the name Nupé was comprised all the country on both banks of the Middle Niger, from the confluence at Lokoja up to Borgu and Gambari. Inland its southern boundary adjoined the Yoruba kingdom of Ilorin; Borgu, Gambari, and Yauri lay to its north; Gwari hemmed it in on the north-east; while, on the east, it may be said to have extended to Nassarawa and the country of the pagan Bassas, on the Benué River. Over the territory thus defined the Emir of Nupé claimed jurisdiction prior to 1897, but after his defeat in that year the Nupé country to the south of the Middle Niger became an independent province under the name of Kabba, while the limits of the rest of Nupé were much curtailed.

The country everywhere has the appearance of great fertility, and, except that the track of the slave-raider is marked in all directions by ruined towns and villages, one would imagine Nupé to be a most prosperous kingdom. The bulk of the population is pagan, still unconverted by their conquerors, though near the large towns, presided over by the Faithful, Mohammedanism is to a certain extent professed. That the Nupés—*i.e.* the Pagans—are a magnificent race, both physically and mentally,

is apparent to anyone who visits their country, though unchecked oppression has gradually told on their natural characteristics. As blacksmiths, workers in brass, leather, and glass, as weavers, and as canoe builders, they probably excel all the tribes of Central Africa. Their workmanship shows a skill and taste in design which, although somewhat crude, lacks only development to become artistic. Brass bowls, vessels of various patterns, trumpets, swords and spears, saddlery, embroidered slippers, bags, baskets, and glass armlets and bangles are amongst their specialties; whilst, in the country parts, there is evidence enough of their taste for agriculture. A peculiar trait in the character of the heathen Nupé is his cheerfulness under the most adverse circumstances; his village may be raided by the Mohammedans, and his friends and relations carried off into slavery, yet in a few days he will return from his hiding-place, rebuild his house, and settle down as if nothing had happened.

The principal towns and villages are situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the main river or its numerous tributaries. Bida,* the capital (where there is now a British Resident and escort), lies some thirty-five miles inland from the left bank of the Middle Niger, and is reached in the rainy season by ascending the Wonangi River to a town of the same name; but in the dry season the journey from the Niger is usually made by road, and takes about two days. The city covers an area of about four square miles, is circular in shape, and is surrounded by a mud wall and ditch. Like Gando, it is built in a hollow, commanded on all sides by low hills, while two small streams, flowing from the south and west, unite within the town before proceeding to join the River Kaduna, which passes within half a mile or so of the northern walls. There are altogether ten gates, the largest being known as the Hausa gate on the north, the Ilorin gate on the west, the Bomosu Barra gate on the south-

* Lieutenant C. F. S. Vandeleur, D.S.O. (1897), made the mean latitude of Bida $9^{\circ} 5' 13''$ N.; the longitude $6^{\circ} 1' E.$

west, and the Wonangi gate on the south-east. Compared with other Fulah provincial capitals, Bida is architecturally remarkable; outwardly it is very similar to other towns, with the usual mud-enclosed palaces, mat-enclosed dwellings, tree-shaded open spaces, and market-places; but the interiors of some of the palaces display an amount of artistic taste surprising in such an out-of-the-way part of the world. The hard clay of the walls is beautifully polished, and in many cases ceramic ornamentation is found; while the Moorish ceiling and the horseshoe arch are by no means uncommon.

The only other town of any importance in Northern Nupé (*i.e.* the portion of the kingdom situated on the left bank of the Middle Niger) is Rabba—the old capital; and perhaps the only reason that it is still of importance is that it is a crossing place for caravans, and that the Niger Company has here a trading station, which (excepting Wushishi, on the Kaduna) is the only one on this bank of the river. In reality the place is little more than a large village, and, with the exception of the tombs of the kings, there is nothing to show that it was at one time the capital of a flourishing State, and a trade centre. Its appearance is, however, decidedly picturesque, the clusters of little grass huts descending to the water's edge, and standing out against a background of handsome dark green trees, while just above the town high sandstone cliffs cast ruddy reflections across the far-extending river.

The greater part of Southern Nupé—the portion of the kingdom situated on the right bank of the Middle Niger and now known as Kabba—passed into the hands of the emir only in the latter part of the last century, and was for many years practically the Nupé slaving preserve. It adjoins the kingdom of Ilorin on the south and west, while towards the east it stretches an indefinite distance into the country inhabited by various pagan tribes, notably the Yagbas, the Ogidis, and the Kukurukus. In this wide tract there are several large towns, most of which owe their extent to having been hitherto war camps, or bases of operations, for the Fulah slave-raiders—now,

thanks to the successful 1897 expedition of the Royal Niger Company, a thing of the past. To Egga,* which lies on the right bank of the river some three hundred miles above Lokoja, this old order of things never applied, for, ever since the white trader extended his influence to Nupé, Egga has been the chief trading port of the kingdom. That it has frequently suffered at the hands of the emir and his Fulah warriors is true; but, though more than once burnt to the ground, it has always been immediately rebuilt. Situated as it is on the direct route between Kano and Ilorin, it naturally forms a great meeting-place for native merchants, who are, doubtless, also attracted to the spot by the knowledge that they can here purchase European goods at a far cheaper rate than anywhere inland.

Another town of some consequence on this bank is Shonga—a starting point for Ilorin, and within three days' march of that town. A small navigable river flows from Shonga Town into the Niger, which it enters at a point almost opposite Rabba, and traders going south adopt this route, as it shortens the overland journey from the Niger to Ilorin and Lagos by two days—a matter of some consideration when the cost of carriers has to be taken into account. Of Nupé and its towns there is little more to be said, except that the startling events of 1897 and the subsequent Imperial administration have brought about vast changes in the country, with immense benefits for the pagan population.†

The kingdom of Ilorin, which, like Nupé, has been much under discussion of late years, is the southernmost Fulah province, and is situated between Nupé and Yorubaland proper, *i.e.* the hinterland of Lagos Colony. At one time it formed a part of the pagan kingdom of Yoruba,‡ but

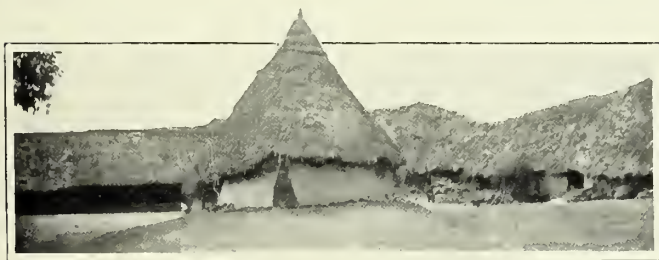
* The journey from Egga to Bida can be accomplished in one day, though, as a rule, it occupies two or even three.

† *Vide* Chapter VI.

‡ Sultan Bello says of the Yorubas: "They originated from the remnants of the children of Canaan, who were of the tribe of Nimrod. The cause of their establishment in the west of Africa



THE BUTCHER'S STALL.



A YORUBA JU-JU HOUSE.



YORUBA WOMEN.

was incorporated into the Fulah Empire at the beginning of the last century by Dan Fodio, who, however, never completely conquered it. After the Reformer's death Mohammedan influence gradually spread south; the town of Ilorin was proclaimed the capital of the province,* and the Fulahs overran the whole of Yorubaland—almost to the sea. For many years the Yorubas remained subservient to the Fulahs, though Islam made but few converts among the southern tribes, and eventually the people of Ibadan raised a rebellion, when, with the assistance of the neighbouring pagan tribes, they succeeded in driving the Fulahs back to their capital at Ilorin. This event occurred some forty years ago, since which time hardly a year of peace has been known, though, now that the entire country has passed under the protection of Great Britain, a more satisfactory state of affairs may be expected, and the Mohammedans will have to adopt some methods of conversion other than by the sword.†

The Ilorin country is, perhaps, one of the most pleasant and fertile parts of West Africa south of the Middle Niger, with a climate almost free from the pestilential malaria of the coast. Situated in the basin of the Niger, it is well watered by numerous rivers and streams, which in the wet season (June to October) can only be crossed by canoe-ferry, though at other times generally fordable.

was, as it is stated, in consequence of their being driven by Yaa-Rooba, son of Kahtan, out of Arabia, to the western coast between Egypt and Abyssinia. From that spot they advanced into the interior of Africa, till they reached Yarba, where they fixed their residence." The tribal marks of the pagan Yorubas were originally several fine cuts along the cheeks, but nowadays the practice of marking appears to be going out of fashion (*see p. 178*).

* This was brought about by a Mohammedan priest named Alimi, who persuaded the pagan king, Afouja, to ask the Fulahs to aid him in his frontier wars. *Vide* "Up the Niger," page 172.

† The first Fulah Emir of Ilorin was Abdul Salami (son of Alimi), about 1831; he was succeeded by his brother Sitta, 1840–1858; after whom the following have reigned: Zobeiru (son of Abdul Salami), 1858–1867; Alihu (son of Sitta), 1867–1891; Suliman (son of Alihu), 1891.

Vast rolling plains alternate with low ranges of forest-clad hills, the bush being in places dense, in others almost park-like in appearance. The paths, from village to village and from farm to farm, are nowhere more than three feet wide, and in the rainy season are fringed with coarse grass, often growing to a height of eight or ten feet. The villages are at no great distance apart, and many of them consist of merely one or two adjacent farms, for the people are mainly agriculturists, and pay great attention to the cultivation of the land which they have cleared in the neighbourhood of their homes. Yams grow in abundance, and form the principal food of the inhabitants; while plantains, bananas, millet, Guinea corn, Indian corn, sugar-cane, ground-nuts, sweet potatoes, and tobacco are extensively cultivated. Yet the country is so well peopled that it only supplies sufficient food stuff for its own wants.

Travelling from the north, one is much struck by the difference in appearance between the buildings of the Ilorins and those of their neighbours, the Nupés. The dwellings of the latter are all circular in shape, with the neatest of conical roofs, while those of the former are long, low, and untidily-thatched sheds. Towns, villages, and farms are constructed on the same principle, and consist of a high enclosure wall of mud, on the inner side of which are ranged the dwelling apartments, each family having a separate enclosure, with a central court-yard containing numerous little mud-granaries.

The majority of the inhabitants are pagan negroes of the darkest colour, though the upper classes of the country are Mohammedans, and, being of a lighter colour than the rest, claim descent from the Fulahs, who in many cases have married heathen wives. The men are fine, sturdy Africans, good horsemen, and inured to hardship; while the women, whether slaves or free-born, are well proportioned, cheerful, and light-hearted. In this latter respect the Ilorins, both men and women, are remarkable; they appear to have few cares, and every evening, from dusk to midnight, their towns and villages are filled

with the sounds of revelry, music and dancing being the most popular forms of amusement. In spite of all this, they are extremely superstitious, and much in the power of their priests, who prey on the simple pagan in various ways, the principal of which is the maintenance of a staff of persons disguised in strange garments, who profess to be "ghosts," and who carry out the commands of the priest—even to committing murder. Amongst these pagans, also, is a sect worshipping thunder and lightning, or the god Shango, whose votaries are distinguished by a necklace of small white beads; these people are considered to possess the power of directing lightning to any object they choose, and are consequently much dreaded, even by the followers of the Prophet. Neither is superstition wanting in the Mohammedan, who adorns himself with charms of all kinds to ward off disasters and to bring good luck, and who has a considerable amount of faith in the pagan fetishes. To such an extent is this carried that, for many years, an old pagan priestess (a captive from the Borgus) was maintained at the court of Ilorin and virtually ruled the kingdom.

Ilorin,* the capital of the country, lies about seventy miles south of the Middle Niger, and is a town of considerable size, though not now by any means as prosperous as it at one time was, its decline having been brought about by the continuous misrule of the Fulahs. Previous to 1889, when Major Claude MacDonald conducted a mission to Ilorin, the accounts given of the place were absurdly exaggerated; it was described as the largest city in the country, as the "Mecca of West Africa," and possessed of no less than 3,000 mosques. As a matter of fact, although its dilapidated mud wall is some nine miles in circumference, much of the enclosed space is meadowland or cultivation, and, as far as mosques are concerned, there

* Latitude 8° 30' N.; 1,300 feet above sea level. It was originally founded about 1790 by fugitive slaves from different parts of Yoruba, each tribe occupying its own quarter of the town, and being represented in the government by a chief. With the advent of the Fulahs all this came to an end.

is only one of any importance, and even that would be regarded by Mohammedans of other parts of the world as nothing better than a barn. Still, Ilorin is not without its charms, for there is something of the picturesque in the groups of shady baobab and other trees which grow everywhere among the huts of the natives, and spread their wide branches over the open market places. The palace of the emir and the houses of the principal Baloguns, or war-chiefs, are surrounded by solid and high walls, within which are other enclosures, with patches of cultivation and occasionally a wild garden. Roads run from the centre of the city in all directions, passing through the numerous gates* and into the country like spokes from the nave of a wheel; while the River Asa, flowing towards the Niger, receives, a little north of Ilorin, two tributaries, on the ground between which the city stands.

Commercially, Ilorin must always remain, from its situation, of very considerable importance, all trade between the Niger and Lagos passing through the town; moreover, its markets are visited by the surrounding pagan tribes, and now that the country has commenced to settle down under the new administration, a great impetus will doubtless be given to the development of the resources of a most productive land. Such natural products as shea-butter, rubber, and gum are abundant; iron is found in large quantities; numerous farms are already in a high state of cultivation; while the pagan people are naturally industrious, and as expert in their various manufactures as even the aboriginal inhabitants of Nupé. One thing only has been wanting all these years to make both the town of Ilorin and the whole of the province thoroughly prosperous—peace. Hitherto plunder and oppression have overshadowed the land; to be robbed of his property, if not of his freedom, was the prospect of every pagan; and even the Hausa merchant trading between the Niger and the coast had to submit to heavy

* There are twelve actual gateways; but about a mile of the wall in the north-east corner has disappeared.

blackmail, or run the risk of his caravan being looted on the road. All this, we trust, now that a British Residency has been established in the capital, has passed away for ever, and the outlook for Ilorin is full of great promise. The railway* from Lagos to Ibadan is being pushed northwards, whereby, it is reasonable to suppose that, within a few years, this vast fertile tract will benefit enormously; its produce will be able to reach the coast at small cost, and the peace of the country will be doubly assured.

* Gauge 3 feet 6 inches:

CHAPTER XIII.

INTERNATIONAL COMPLICATIONS.

McQueen's Warning—The Development of Senegal—The "Game of Grab"—The Berlin Conference—"Spheres of Influence"—The Niger Region—French and English—Monteil's Mission—Mizon's—The French War with Dahomey—Timbuctoo becomes a French Protectorate—Lugard *v.* Decœur—A Veritable Steeplechase—Lugard Wins—The Case of Captain Toutée—Anglo-French Treaties.

LITTLE mention has been made so far in these pages of the attempts of foreign Powers to step in and oust us from the position which we had secured for ourselves by long years of exploration and commercial enterprise in the Niger Districts. Yet a study of the events of the last quarter of a century reveals an extraordinary story. It was well known that the foundation of a mighty empire in Africa had been the dream of French statesmen ever since the early years of the nineteenth century, and as far back as 1821 McQueen—the prophet of the Niger—foresaw the trouble which eventually came to pass. In one of his warnings he wrote: "France is already established on the Senegal, and commands that river, and if the supineness and carelessness of Great Britain allow that powerful, enterprising rival to step in and fix herself securely on the Niger, then it is evident that, with such a settlement in addition to her command of the Senegal, France will command all Northern Africa. The consequences cannot fail to be fatal to the best interests of this country, and, by means surer than even by war and conquest, tend ultimately to bring ruin on our best tropical colonial establishment."

No notice was taken of this warning, with the result that France gradually crept forward in all directions, while Great Britain did little or nothing to check her

advance. One cannot blame France for taking advantage of the "supineness and carelessness of Great Britain," and one can only regret the short-sightedness that ever permitted France to gain a footing in the Niger valley, and thus divert half the trade of West Africa from the channel into which it would otherwise naturally have drifted. But the time for repining has gone by, and perhaps, after all, we have as large a slice of the country as we can conveniently look after.

By 1876 the development of Senegal was the great colonial problem of the French Government, and three years later the construction of railways and the building of forts in the direction of the Upper Niger had commenced. The pursuit of the great war-chief Samory kept French expeditions ever on the move, and the advance eastward towards Timbuctoo became rapid, and with it kept pace the ambitions of French statesmen. Their schemes had developed, and were by 1881 of gigantic proportions; from the three principal bases, viz. Algeria, Senegal, and the French Congo, and from the minor bases of Assinie and Grand Bassam on the Ivory Coast and Porto Novo on the Slave Coast, it was proposed to make a simultaneous advance inland, conclude treaties with the natives, and convert the whole of West Africa (except, perhaps, a few little strips of coast line) into one huge French dependency. With regard to the Lower Niger country they were sorely troubled, since from Lagos eastward to the French Congo they had no footing on the coast. Gambetta, however, saw a way out of this difficulty, and hoped to establish a claim to the Lower Niger districts by subsidising two French trading companies—with what result the reader knows. The Royal Niger Company (or as it then was, the National African Company) bowed the Frenchmen out of the river, though when, a few years later, the latter discovered that they had been checkmated, they made desperate attempts to recover their lost ground. But we shall revert to these matters presently.

In the meantime Europe had started a "game of grab"

in Africa. Germany, in the summer of 1884, swooped down on the Cameroons and Togoland, an event so unforeseen and startling that other Powers with claims in West Africa immediately set to work to increase their possessions right and left, so as to prevent the remainder of the country falling into the unyielding talons of the German Eagle. Thus, Great Britain proclaimed the Niger Protectorate, and France, who had already become possessed of considerable territory on the banks of the Upper Niger above Timbuctoo, and had placed a gunboat on the river at Bamaku, strengthened her hold on the Ivory and Slave Coasts, reviving her old Porto Novo settlement, which she had practically abandoned twenty years before. In order to check this general scramble, the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 was assembled, when fourteen Powers met to discuss the question of the Congo, and incidentally to come to an understanding about the Niger, as well as to formulate general rules concerning the matter of annexations. In the "General Act of the Conference of Berlin" we find the term "sphere of influence" used officially for the first time, but only with reference to certain parts of Africa. Later, in the various Agreements, it was applied to all parts, and the principle was intended to ward off unpleasant disputes between the different European Powers who had launched expeditions and despatched officials to annex new countries in Africa. It was in reality a *modus vivendi*, and the map of Africa was periodically divided up with ruler and pencil, the lines thus drawn forming temporary boundaries confining the actions of the different Powers interested. Each Power retained whatever territory it could at the time establish a claim to—as a rule certain portions of the coast-line—and in order that trade with the interior might remain unhampered, these coast possessions were apportioned a given amount of background, or, as it was termed, "hinterland," within which the particular European Power should be permitted to extend its influence. There was no actual distribution of the land, but merely an understanding among the Powers that each should have

certain spheres within which the other Powers would not interfere.

This briefly is what was intended by the term "sphere of influence," as originated at the Berlin Conference. There were, of course, numerous provisos, the principal of which related to the annexation of fresh territories. In the case of intended annexation* (or extension by protection) by a Power, it was necessary that the other Powers should receive information of the claim, which might, if necessary, have to be proved by the production of treaties made with the natives. Theoretically, the "sphere of influence" arrangement was excellent; practically, however, there were many difficulties in the way of its working smoothly. It was never for a moment imagined that the pencil lines on the map could remain as definite boundaries of territory possessed by different European nations, since, for instance, they might run through the centre of a tribe, or even of a town; it was, therefore, arranged that when a Power had annexed, or proclaimed a Protectorate over its hinterland up to the temporary boundary line, then that Power and any other Power with an adjacent sphere of influence should appoint Commissioners to proceed to the spot, in order to survey and lay down the actual boundary line. Several of these frontier delimitations have already taken place, and others are now in progress, though it must be many years before the boundaries of the whole country are clearly defined.

Such were the general arrangements arrived at at Berlin, but in addition to the mutual agreements about spheres, it was decided that the Congo and the Niger should be opened to free navigation. So far as the latter river is concerned this soon became an important matter, for the French more than once endeavoured to interpret the General Act for their own purposes; thus, in 1892 the French gunboat *Ardent* passed up the Lower Niger

* It is erroneous to suppose that annexation in Africa carries with it acquisition of land; practically it implies merely a right to see that the country is properly governed; any land desired by Europeans has to be bought or rented from the natives.

fully laden with munitions of war, altogether contrary to the principles of free navigation as established by the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna, 1815, and as applied to the Niger by the Berlin Act. Free navigation, as laid down by international law—for the Danube, the Niger, or any other river—means simply the free transit of vessels carrying merchandise, and for a foreign man-of-war to enter without permission a river flowing through the territory of another Power is a direct breach of law. In the case of the *Ardent*, however, the vessel did not ascend any great distance before she ran aground and became powerless, and representations having been made to the French Government, the usual reply was received—that the commander was acting without orders, and that he had been recalled. Another matter which has also been misinterpreted is that of free trade on the Niger, for whereas the Congo was opened to free trade as well as to free navigation, attempts were made to assert that the same applied to the Niger. A reference, however, to the Berlin Act at once shows the fallacy of this notion, only freedom of navigation being guaranteed.

To return to the sphere of influence arrangements initiated at the Berlin Conference of 1884-85: broad lines of demarcation were, as we have said, laid down confining each European Power to certain districts (with foundations on the coast), within which that one Power alone had the right to extend its influence. This could be done by making treaties with the natives, and notifying the same to the other Powers, when the treaty-making Power was without further inquiry (or even examination of the treaties) regarded as the *de facto* suzerain. It is worthy of note, as bearing on later events, that Great Britain suggested that effective occupation should follow the conclusion of a treaty, but France* dissenting, this was negatived except with regard to the actual coast regions, it being considered impossible to establish posts in the interior otherwise than by a very gradual advance.

* At the instance of Baron de Courcel.

Between 1885 and 1889 various agreements were entered into between Great Britain, France, and Germany, and spheres of influence were more clearly defined; then followed, in 1889 and 1890, the two great agreements—the Anglo-German and the Anglo-French—by which all former agreements were ratified, and boundary matters placed, as far as then possible, on a sound footing. Leaving the Anglo-German agreements for the present, we will deal with the agreements between Great Britain and France as to their respective spheres in this part of West Africa.

As the result of the *pourparlers* of the previous few years, an arrangement was signed in Paris on the 10th August, 1889. Article I. defined the boundaries between the British and French spheres in the neighbourhood of the Gambia; and Article II. those in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone. Then came the delimitation of the Gold Coast, contained in Article III., and by Article IV. the boundary between Lagos and Porto Novo was defined as follows:

On the Slave Coast the line of demarcation between the spheres of influence of the two Powers shall be identical with the meridian which intersects the territory of Porto Novo at the Ajarra Creek, leaving Pokrah, or Pokea, to the English colony of Lagos. It shall follow the above-mentioned meridian as far as the 9th degree of north latitude, where it shall stop; To the south it shall terminate on the sea shore, after having passed through the territory of Appah, the capital of which shall continue to belong to England.

On the 5th August, 1890, were signed at London the “Declarations exchanged between the Government of Her Britannic Majesty and the Government of the French Republic,” paragraph 2 of which dealt with the northern boundary of the Niger Territories:—

The Government of Her Britannic Majesty recognises the sphere of influence of France to the south of her Mediterranean possessions up to a line from Say on the Niger to Barua on Lake Tchad, drawn in such manner as to comprise in the sphere of action of the Niger Company all that fairly belongs to the

kingdom of Sokoto, the line to be determined by the Commissioners to be appointed.

The state of affairs in the neighbourhood of the Niger, therefore, as far as the British and French were concerned in August, 1890, may be summarised as follows: The western boundary of the Gold Coast was fixed from the sea to as far as the 9th degree of north latitude, and the western boundary of Lagos to the same parallel; while the Say-Barua line separated the British Niger Protectorate from the French Mediterranean possessions. All this is clear enough as far as it goes; the northern limits of the hinterland of the Niger Protectorate had been settled, as had been the boundaries of the other adjacent coast possessions on the west up to the 9th parallel. About the limits eastward of the hinterland of French Senegal, the limits westward of the Niger Protectorate and Lagos Colony north of the ninth parallel, or about the northern limits of the Gold Coast Colony, no arrangements had been made, for the reason that, at that time, the distance intervening between the advanced line of British posts and French posts was so great as to make it improbable that the question of more definite boundaries would arise for many years. With what rapidity this intervening distance was covered we will now show.

By 1887 the French had reconnoitred the Upper Niger as far as Kabara, the port of Timbuctoo, and between 1888 and 1891 Colonel Archinard took Segu, conquered the Bamako tribes farther down stream, and drove Samory out of his stronghold to the south. In the two following years Colonels Humbert and Combes continued the pursuit of Samory, while Archinard pushed forward towards Timbuctoo, capturing (April, 1893) the important town of Djenne, and establishing a military post there. A flotilla of gunboats now advanced down the river to Mopti, where a depôt was formed, and after some minor operations against Samory, Colonel Bonnier, who was now in command, decided on the capture of Timbuctoo. For this purpose he assembled his forces at Segu, and commenced

the descent of the river on Christmas Day, 1893. In the meantime, however, Lieutenant Boiteaux, who had been left in command of the flotilla at Mopti with strict injunctions not to advance towards Timbuctoo, conceived the idea of gaining for himself the honour of seizing the great prize. Accordingly, he steamed down to Timbuctoo, landed his dozen rifles, and, after exchanging a few shots, hoisted the Tricolor in the city on Christmas Day, when Bonnier and his force were still 300 miles away. The audacity of this undertaking was astounding; but, on the arrival of his superior on the 10th January, 1894, the unfortunate Boiteaux was severely reprimanded, and awarded forty-five days' simple arrest. Thus, by 1894, the French were in possession of Timbuctoo, and though they suffered severely from time to time at the hands of the surrounding Tuareg tribes, they succeeded in holding the "Mysterious City," which had so long been their objective.

While all this was going on, the French were busy elsewhere, striving to extend their influence both by organised military expeditions and by duly accredited individual emissaries. The ostensible object of the military expeditions was the overthrow of the great Samory, and his occasional repulse or voluntary retirement naturally led to the advance of the French, and the establishment of posts to protect their lines of communication. Speaking first of the individual emissaries we will mention two—Monteil and Mizon; the former making a very remarkable journey and proving himself worthy of having his name added to the long roll of African explorers. The action of the French Government in despatching these men to the British Niger Territories we need not here discuss, and whether the results of their reconnaissances (to use a temperate expression) were considered by their employers as satisfactory the world has yet to discover.

No sooner was the agreement of 1890 signed than Monteil started from Senegal, with an escort of ten Toucouleurs to reconnoitre the Say-Barua line. What his instructions were we cannot definitely tell, though it is fair to presume from his subsequent promotion that he carried them out

to the letter, and the account of his travels which he afterwards published* discloses sufficient to enable us to arrive at the true nature of his mission. Commencing his journey on the 20th August, 1890, he went to Kayes by steamer, and then marched to Segou, the French outpost. From Segou he traversed the whole bend of the Niger (hitherto unexplored by Europeans), and eight months later struck the Niger at Say. He next visited Sokoto and Kano, and eventually reached Kuka, whence he passed (1892), *viâ* Bilma, to Murzuk and Tripoli. Now for the object of his mission. The agreement of 1890 had said that the Say-Barua line was to be "drawn in such a manner as to comprise in the sphere of action of the Royal Niger Company all that fairly belongs to the kingdom of Sokoto," the reason for this latitude being principally the doubt that existed as to whether Air (or Asben), lying considerably to the north of the line, was still tributary to Sokoto.

Had Monteil travelled direct to Air to institute his inquiries there would be little more to be said, but, as a matter of fact, he never went north of the Say-Barua line, and what he did was to endeavour to make treaties in the name of the "Emperor of the French" with all those chiefs who had already concluded treaties with the Royal Niger Company. He commenced with the Sultan of Sokoto, whose treaty with the Niger Company, he was fully aware, formed the basis of the whole agreement of 1890, and who he also knew was heavily subsidised by the Company; he approached other chiefs, who were similarly situated, and throughout his book he goes out of the way on all occasions to abuse and sneer at the British officials who had been before him. We are not now entering into the question of the validity of treaties, but, as the reader may wonder how a chief, already subsidised by, and under treaty obligations to, one Power could conclude a second treaty with an agent of another Power, we will say that possibly in the case of minor chiefs greed might induce

* *Dé Saint Louis à Tripoli, par le lac Tchad.*

them to perjure themselves. With men like the Sultan of Sokoto such a thing would be most improbable, and, in fact, he afterwards denied having had any dealings with the French. Mr. Wallace, who conveyed, in 1894, the annual subsidy to the Sultan, took with him a Hausa translation of a paragraph in the *Temps*, stating that Monteil had concluded a treaty between France and Sokoto, and on this being shown to the Sultan's grand vizier, the latter wrote an autograph letter in which he affirmed that the French statements were absolutely false in every particular.

With regard to the young naval lieutenant, M. Mizon, the story is an even more unpleasant one, and since he appears to have been a man devoid of all tact, his mission proved of very doubtful benefit to France. Mizon entered the Lower Niger in a steam launch in 1890 by the Forcados mouth, and within a few days was attacked by the lawless Patani tribes on the banks of the Warri, an event which gave him his first opportunity of forwarding to Paris charges against the officials of the Royal Niger Company, whom he openly accused of instigating the natives to murder him. Rescued by the Niger Company from the Patanis, he proceeded on his voyage up the Benué River, with the undisguised intention of establishing French influence in the kingdom of Adamawa, which at that time was acknowledged to be within the spheres of Great Britain and Germany. The marvellous tales which he related on his return home made him a popular hero, and his popularity increased with each fresh accusation of perfidy—so much so, that in 1892 the French Government decided to send him on a further mission to Adamawa.

The arrangements made for this new venture were so extraordinary that we will give them in detail :—

A large sum of money—to which the State contributed—was raised to enable him to return to the Niger, and a formal demand was made by the French Government that the Niger Company should allow him to carry through its territories the following munitions of war—viz. two mountain guns, with ordinary shell, grape, and canister, a quick-firing Hotchkiss

cannon, 150 rifles with 18,000 cartridges, and 100 revolvers with 15,000 cartridges. The Company protested earnestly against this extraordinary demand on three grounds:—

(1) That the passage of such large munitions of war into the interior of Africa, under the charge of an uncontrolled adventurer, would be a distinct breach of the European agreement known as the Brussels Act, and would be calculated to do great mischief to the native populations beyond the territories of the Company.

(2) That M. Mizon, having expressly declared and claimed credit for his intention to prevent the extension of the British and German spheres, it would be, on the one hand, unpatriotic, and, on the other hand, unfair to a friendly Power, to facilitate such an aggressive expedition.

(3) That as the Company had displeased several Mohammedan emirs in the British sphere, through having steadfastly refused to furnish them with a single rifle or cartridge to assist them in carrying on their slave raids on the neighbouring pagan tribes, and through having also forcibly prevented such raids, it would be most impolitic to allow M. Mizon to present himself to these emirs as an ally with cannon, rifles, and a large supply of ammunition.

Unfortunately, at that moment (August, 1892) there was, for practical purposes, no Ministry in Great Britain, while the French Government was carried off its feet by a passing wave of popular enthusiasm. The vehement protests of the Company were, therefore, of no avail, and M. Mizon returned to the Niger and Benué in September last with six French companions, an Arab attendant named Hamed, and a large force of sharpshooters from Senegal. The foresight of the Niger Company, founded on experience of M. Mizon's character and methods, has been fully justified, as shown by the evidence of M. Mizon's French companions.*

Unluckily for M. Mizon he fell out with his officers, and one of them (the doctor of the expedition) left him and returned to France, where he at once reported to his Government the true state of affairs—how his late commanding officer, in order to make treaties and to ingratiate himself with the Mohammedans of the Muri province of

* From a notice in the *Times* (June, 1893) of "French Slave Raiding in British Territory."

Sokoto, was assisting them, with French arms,* to raid the pagans on all sides. The newspapers at first regarded these statements as an exaggeration actuated by personal animus against M. Mizon, but a second officer of the expedition shortly arrived to corroborate the statements, and French opinion changed. "Mizon went to Africa," said a French newspaper of the day, "to make French influence penetrate there. He has compromised it. He has allied himself with the Moslems against the pagans, whom the more practical English have always taken care to protect. Let us hope that the Ministry will take measures to withdraw from Mizon's authority his unfortunate subordinates, and to recompense as it merits his extraordinary conduct."

A telegram was despatched recalling M. Mizon, and instructing M. Nebout (second in command) to proceed for scientific purposes to Yola. The recall, however, never reached M. Mizon, who had gone on to Yola and concluded a treaty with the Emir of Adamawa. The attitude of the French expedition, which had all along been watched by the Royal Niger Company, became so aggressive that the Agent-General now decided that the time for action had arrived, and accordingly he ordered up troops to seize the French vessels. It was eventually agreed to refer the matter to the Governments concerned, and M. Mizon left for home shortly afterwards.

On his arrival in France at the end of 1893 he gave a good account of himself, and, amongst other things, claimed to have established a French protectorate over Adamawa. His statements were contradicted by both the Niger Company's Agent-General and the German official, Herr von Stetten, but they were, doubtless, believed by the French public, and the French Press naturally seized the opportunity to stir up an anti-British feeling in the country. The *affaire Mizon* remained, long after the death of its author, to keep alive, among a certain section of the French public, suspicion of England. Whether the recent

* Probably it was these arms that fell into our hands at the capture of Yola in 1901; see page 162.

award of M. le Baron Lambermont with regard to the seizure of the *Sergent Malamine** by the Niger Company in 1893 will close the *affaire* is a matter of opinion. We have, however, said enough to show the methods adopted by these French agents, and it is not difficult to see with what objects they were despatched on their missions. Monteil, it was hoped, would be able to cut down the limits of the kingdom of Sokoto, while Mizon at the same time paved the way for the expansion of the French Congo towards Lake Chad.

That neither wholly succeeded in his task was certainly not due to lack of energy or of scruples. Both men did everything possible to produce in the minds of the natives of the countries visited distrust of Great Britain; and if Mizon did nothing else, he at any rate created in Adamawa a state of unrest which culminated, a few years later, in open defiance of British authority.

Reverting to the military expeditions, everyone must admire the immense energy displayed by France in the attempt to secure for herself a new empire in West Africa. Rapidly she advanced across the bend of the Niger, and had already followed the Sofas into what Great Britain considered to be the hinterland of the Gold Coast (*i.e.* the country north of Ashanti). In this way she was able to connect Senegal with the Ivory Coast, and probably at the close of 1892 the most ambitious of her statesmen imagined that, since Timbuctoo was about to be captured, when French influence would practically extend from Algeria to the Ivory Coast, the limits of their dream had been realised. But, an unexpected development occurring in 1893, a fresh scheme was immediately set

* "France, No. 1 (1902); Awards given by Baron Lambermont in the cases of the Waima Incident, and of the 'Sergent Malamine'; Brussels, July 15, 1902. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of His Majesty, August, 1902." The "Sergent Malamine" Arbitration will be found in full in Appendix III. Baron Lambermont's award, as set forth, shows clearly the illegalities of the Mizon Expedition, and is worthy of very careful perusal.

on foot. French influence in the neighbourhood of Porto Novo had been progressing during the past few years, and, in 1892, the King of Dahomey had been brought to book. This was followed by the conquest of his kingdom, and almost at the same moment that Timbuctoo was taken a French Protectorate was proclaimed over Dahomey.

Here, then, was another base from which to advance into the interior. Dahomey, said the French, is entitled to its hinterland like any other coast possession, and there is no reason why the hinterland should not be coterminous with the hinterland of Algeria on the north, and with that of Senegal on the west. True, Germany might raise objections to the curtailment of her Togo hinterland, and Great Britain might protest, but Great Britain was always amenable to reason, or, at any rate, could be "bounced" out of any claims she might put forward. So matters stood at the beginning of 1893, and the French had no sooner laid their plans than they commenced to put them into execution. Samory was again stated to be the objective of the expeditions advancing eastward across the Gold Coast hinterland and northwards from Dahomey. The great scheme had meanwhile developed very considerably—it was, in fact, doubtful whether France had not designs on the kingdom of Sokoto itself. Be that as it may, by 1894 Monteil was marching on Kong with 1,500 men, while no fewer than four expeditions were concentrating on Borgu, viz. those commanded by Captain Decœur, Captain Toutée, Lieutenant Baud, and M. Albi (Administrator of Dahomey). Considering that in 1890 the Royal Niger Company had concluded a treaty with the King of Borgu, and with the King of Gurma to the north, and that the existence of these treaties was well known in France, the news that the French Government was about to despatch a powerful expedition under Captain Decœur to make treaties with Borgu was received in England with considerable surprise. Although fully satisfied as to the validity of the Borgu treaties of 1890, the Niger Company determined to checkmate Captain Decœur, and the sequel is interesting. Captain Decœur's expedition left France

for Dahomey on the 24th July, 1892; four days later Captain Lugard left England. It was, as the Paris papers said, a "veritable steeplechase," but it was won on the 10th November by Captain Lugard, who made a treaty with the King of Nikki, and left the place on his return journey five days before Decœur put in an appearance. The reason the French gave for initiating this race was that the chief with whom the Niger Company had concluded their 1890 treaty was not the acknowledged King of Borgu; the King of Nikki was, they said, the real ruler of all Borgu, and it is interesting to note that Decœur and Albi returned from Nikki in the belief that they had been successful in making a valid treaty.

The case of Captain Toutée is somewhat remarkable, and certainly throws a flood of light on French methods. The first that was heard of him was an application made on his behalf to the Royal Niger Company to grant him a free passage to Boussa, since he was desirous, as a private individual, of proceeding to the French outposts in the neighbourhood of Timbuctoo. How he changed his *rôle* from private individual to political agent history does not relate, but his next appearance was as head of a French expedition that established a fort on the right bank of the Middle Niger in Boussa territory, and opposite to Bajibo on the left bank (in Sokoto territory). This raid into British territory was protested against, and the French Government ordered Toutée to withdraw. Meanwhile other French expeditions had entered Borgu, but these were travelling expeditions for treaty making, and by the close of 1895 all had withdrawn to Dahomey, after which, for a whole year, no French representatives were to be found in Borgu. Twelve months later, however, the preparations of the Niger Company for the Nupé and Ilorin war gave the French colonial party an opportunity of inducing France to disregard all previous agreements by a renewed invasion of Borgu, and to propound the theory (which, in 1885, we may remark, she had refused to entertain) that treaties must be followed by effective occupation. The dangers attending such a course, where any



IN A NUFÉ MARKET.

Photo: Capt. H. Needham.



RIVERSIDE SCENE,
MIDDLE NIGER.

Photo: Capt. H. Needham.

dispute as to boundaries exists, are enormous, and a knowledge of the situation of the French and British posts in West Africa in the spring of 1898 speaks volumes for the discipline which the subordinate officers were able to maintain among the native troops of the two rival Powers. In some instances, as we shall see, the Union Jack and the Tricolor floated from the walls of the same town; the garrisons were quartered side by side, yet nothing of even an unfriendly nature was ever heard. Both sides awaited the decision of the Commission sitting in Paris—a situation as extraordinary as any in the annals of history.

Let us now see how the British and French posts stood at this time, not only as regards Borgu, but also as to the hinterland of the Gold Coast. South of the 9th parallel the boundaries of the respective spheres were made clear enough by the agreement of 1889, and the country that was in dispute lay between this parallel and a line drawn from Segou to Say (about $13^{\circ} 30' N.$), while a line continued due north from the meridian of Newtown to meet the Segou-Say line formed the western limit, and the course of the Niger from Say to Jebba formed the eastern limit of the debatable ground. Within this area both Great Britain and France had a series of fortified posts, though no British posts had been established north of the 11th parallel. We need, therefore, only mention the posts that were occupied by British and French troops between the 9th and 11th parallels. Enumerating these from west to east, we find that they were as follow: *British*—Busunu, Wa, Nasa, Yarida, Walwale, Gambaga, Bawku, Borea, Okuta, Bere, Ilesha, Leaba, Fort Goldie, Jebba. *French*—Wa, Tumu, Kountum, Oako, Bofilo, Kirikiri, Bassila, Manigri, Semere, Wangara, Birmi, Kuandi, Wari, Bori, Banikoro, Kandi, Sori, Bué, Nikki, Shori, Borea, Paraku, Kishi, Kiama, Boussa, Lafagou. These posts were for the most part in successive lines, and in no case had the French line of posts been pushed through the British line of posts, though the respective lines were in touch at Wa on the west and at Borea on the east. Between the 11th parallel and the Segou-Say line the

French had about a dozen posts—all situated in territory claimed by Great Britain by right of treaties, to which matter we are now coming.

African treaties may, perhaps, in many instances, be of doubtful value; still, the Powers assembled at the Berlin Conference of 1885 agreed to abide by them and not to question their validity when the fact of their having been entered into should be made known by one Power to the others. Presumably, therefore, if Great Britain concluded treaties with the native chiefs whose territories lay within what could be reasonably considered to be the British sphere of influence, those treaties, on being communicated to the other Powers, would give Great Britain an effective claim to the territories, and any attempt on the part of another Power to make later treaties with the same chiefs would be (not to speak too strongly) contrary to the comity of nations. But, as in the absence of treaties there could be no claim to territory, and as with the fall of Dahomey France conceived a new scheme of colonial expansion, she set to work to make treaties throughout the previously mentioned debatable hinterlands. The worth of these treaties was, doubtless, discussed fully by the Paris Commission, but about their priority there could have been no question, as the following list will show:

PRINCIPAL TREATIES CONCLUDED BY GREAT
BRITAIN AND FRANCE.

TREATIES.	DATE OF SIGNATURE.	
	BRITISH.	FRENCH.
Wa	1894 and 1897	1895
Yarida ..	31st July, 1892	24th April, 1895
Gambaga ..	28th May, 1894	18th April, 1895
Sansane Mangu	8th August, 1894	28th January, 1895
Nikki	10th November, 1894	26th November, 1894
Kishi	13th October, 1894	1st February, 1895
Kiama	22nd October, 1894	11th February, 1895
Boussa	12th November, 1885, and 20th January, 1890	3rd July, 1895

PRINCIPAL TREATIES (*continued*).

TREATIES.	DATE OF SIGNATURE:	
	BRITISH.	FRENCH.
Mossi Kingdom	2nd July, 1894	
Wagadugu ..	2nd July, 1894	
Leo	6th February, 1897	
Tumu	6th February, 1897	
Dasima ..	1897	
Dawkita ..	1897	
Buna	1894	
Baule	1892	
Busunu ..	5th October, 1894	
Daboya ..	1892 and 1894	
Trugu	1892 and 1894	
Salaga	1st September, 1894	
Gando Sultanate	18th June, 1885	
Gando	1885, 1890, 1894	
Borgu Kingdom	1890	
Sokoto Empire..	1885 and 1890	
Sati .. ..	.. .. .	9th September, 1896
Fada Ngurma ..	.. .. .	20th January, 1895
Botu .. ..	.. .. .	20th January, 1895
Say .. ..	.. .. .	1895
Ilo .. ..	.. .. .	19th February, 1895
Bué .. ..	.. .. .	9th February, 1895
Kandi .. ..	.. .. .	12th August, 1895
Wari .. ..	.. .. .	21st December, 1894

A comparison of this list of treaties with the list of military posts as occupied in the spring of 1898 establishes two interesting facts, viz. that Great Britain occupied no post where France had priority in the matter of treaties (because wherever double treaties had been concluded the British treaties were the first signed), and that France occupied numerous places whose chiefs had made treaties with no other Power than Great Britain. About the priority of these treaties there is no more to be said, and although, from the fact that the British Government had carefully examined and ratified all the treaties concluded by the Royal Niger Company on behalf of Great Britain, their validity should have been

considered beyond question, the French Government appeared to think otherwise. To dispose of this point, we will quote the wording of the more important clauses of a typical treaty—that concluded between the Royal Niger Company and Borgu in 1890:

We the Emir and chiefs of Boussa (or Borgu), in council assembled, representing our country, its dependencies, and tributaries on both banks of the River Niger and as far back as our dominion extends, in accordance with our laws and customs do hereby agree, on behalf of ourselves and our successors for ever.

To grant to the Company full and absolute jurisdiction over all foreigners to our territories—that is to say, over all persons within the territories who are not our native-born subjects. Such jurisdiction shall include the right of protection of such foreigners, of taxation of such foreigners, criminal and civil jurisdiction over such foreigners.

That we will not at any time whatever cede any part of our territories to any other person or State, or enter into any agreement, treaty, or arrangement with any foreign Government except through and with the consent of the Company, or, if the Company should at any time so desire, with the consent of the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India.

To place our territories if and when called upon under the protection of the flag of Great Britain.

All the British treaties were in similar form, and clear and definite in every particular. To deny their value was hopeless, so all that France could assert was that the chiefs who signed away their kingdoms were not what they professed to be. Defeated, however, by the conclusion of fresh treaties with their own acknowledged chiefs, the French took up the new line of effective occupation, to which we have already referred.

The principal territory in dispute was this kingdom of Borgu, and the reason is not far to seek. France desired access to the navigable waters of the Middle Niger and an outlet to the sea, which, until the Dahomey railway reaches the interior, and that from Senegal is extended

eastward, would be of immense advantage to her commerce. Until recently France had not grasped this fact, and she was under the impression that, with a little expenditure, it would be possible to get rid of the natural obstacles which impeded the navigation of the Middle Niger. The extent of these obstacles was not thoroughly understood ; for, in place of the few miles of broken water said to exist in the neighbourhood of Boussa, it was found by Lieutenant Hourst, who made a most remarkable voyage from Bamaku to the mouth of the Niger, that for a distance of almost a thousand miles above Boussa the river was practically unnavigable for anything larger than a canoe. This, then, was the principal object which the French had in view in their forward movement in Borgu.

Before concluding our remarks on the subject of treaties, there are a few details which we ought, perhaps, to lay before the reader. In the first place, by the term treaty, as we have used it in this chapter, is implied in all cases one granting political rights to one or other of the contracting parties, and not a mere treaty of friendship and commerce. Secondly, in the case of the Niger Territories, all treaties concluded by the Royal Niger Company, and afterwards ratified by the British Government, were considered by International law as equivalent to treaties concluded by the Government itself. The extent of country north of Borgu over which the Niger Company had treaty rights is another matter that requires to be mentioned ; for, from the tabulated list of treaties it may not be quite clear that Great Britain had concluded treaties to the north of Say, whereas she could produce treaties made in 1890* covering both banks of the Niger for 500 miles or more above that town, though, as a matter of fact, she had no wish to enforce a claim to this part of the river. The Say-Barua line was chosen by *France*, and Say was fixed on for the reason that it was situated on the right bank of the Niger ; while to show what at the time

* At this date the French had no treaty rights farther down the river than Segu.

(1890) was the popular French acceptance of the terms of the agreement, we may mention that the *République Française*, commenting on the agreement, said: "The line drawn from Say, on the Niger, to Lake Tchad places the kingdoms of Borgu, Sokoto, and Bornu, the richest and most populous parts of the Soudan, within the spheres of the British possessions." This was endorsed by the *Journal des Débats*, the *Siècle*, and the *Temps*, while the latter paper published a map showing the British sphere as limited by a line from Say to Barua and by a line from Say to the Lagos boundary. Since then, however, affairs have changed, and the *Temps* of the 2nd March, 1898, averred that from the 9th parallel to Say was a no-man's-land, belonging to the first comer—in French opinion, France.

There is little more to be said about what constituted the British and French claims to these hinterlands when the Paris Commission of 1898 assembled, but before dismissing the subject it will be interesting to sum up the main points which, so far as the public ever became aware, were *sub judice*. France claimed vast tracts of country to the north of the Gold Coast, and of Lagos Colony (1) as being hinterlands of Senegal and Dahomey; (2) by priority of valid treaties; (3) by right of effective occupation. She denied that the Say-Barua line was intended, in any way, to limit either Power to the west or east respectively of Say or of Barua; she refused to admit the treaties concluded by the Royal Niger Company until communicated to her by the British Government; and she demanded the examination and comparison of all treaties entered into by the two Powers with the same chief. Great Britain, on the other hand, claimed the same tracts of country (1) as being hinterlands of the Gold Coast and Lagos Colonies; (2) by priority of valid treaties; (3) by the duly communicated and duly proclaimed Protectorate assumed (January, 1895) over all countries east of a line drawn from the Lagos boundary to Say.* She refused

*The Earl of Selborne, replying to a question in the House of Lords (March, 1898), said: "Boussa and Nikki, which are in Borgu,

to admit the doctrine of effective occupation as applying to any but the coast regions (Berlin Conference, 1885), and she put forward an indemnity claim on account of the British losses at Waima or Warina, near Sierra Leone. The results of the Commission, which concluded its labours on the 14th June, 1898, may, perhaps, be considered satisfactory to both parties, and a study of the text of the Anglo-French Convention* signed on that date will show how the various claims were amicably adjusted. At the same time, it must be remembered that the demarcation of the northern and eastern boundaries of Northern Nigeria have yet to be made, and it is by no means improbable that, when this is in progress, France will find a loophole in the Convention which will enable her to attempt to advance her frontier. It is well known that she is dissatisfied with her position in the Chad regions; she has long set her affections on Bornu; and, if reports be true, her officials in those parts have no more scruples than had M. Mizon and others.

Coming now to the second part of the chapter—Germany—we have seen how she suddenly established protectorates over the Cameroons and Togo in 1884, prior to which date she had no possessions in West Africa. In the matter of the Cameroons, had the British Government paid attention to the advice of its Consuls at Fernando Po—Burton and others—who pointed out the value of this part of West Africa, the Union Jack would have been flying in the Cameroons half a century ago. No better

have by treaty accepted British protection. The British Protectorate over Borgu was formally notified to the French Government on the 1st January, 1895, and through informal communications the French Government had been aware of it for nearly three years before that date. Boussa was occupied by French troops in February, 1897, and Nikki in November, 1897. Her Majesty's Government have protested against these occupations. The King of Boussa has appealed for protection against the French. One of the points to be determined by the Commission now sitting in Paris is that as to the respective claims of Great Britain and France to the possession of Boussa and Nikki."

* *Vide* Appendix II. to this volume.

illustration is to be found of the apathy displayed in past years by responsible Ministers concerning things African. In 1857 Captain F. A. Close, H.M.S. *Trident*, while in the Cameroons River, was requested by the natives to take over the country for Great Britain. "I was much surprised," he says, "as there was no African land hunger in those days. The West Coast of Africa was looked on, not only as the refuge for the destitute white man, but as the white man's grave, as it is now. Nevertheless, I sent the carpenter's crew on shore to cut down a tree, and made a flagstaff, hoisted the British flag, and took possession, reporting it to the British Consul at Fernando Po." The Consul apparently took no steps in the matter, as the country was never formally annexed. In 1864 much the same occurred again, the Commodore of the West African Squadron, at the request of the inhabitants, hoisting the British flag at Port Victoria, Ambas Bay. The step he had taken was reported to the Government by the Commodore, who, however, was told "to confine himself to the suppression of the Slave Trade, and not attempt the acquisition of Colonies." At length, in 1879, the Cameroons' Chiefs petitioned Her Majesty Queen Victoria to proclaim a protectorate over their country, stating that they had continuously, but unavailingly, petitioned the British Consul on the subject. Still no action was taken by the British Government until 1884, when half-hearted instructions were given to Consul Hewett to make treaties with the Chiefs of the Oil Rivers and Cameroons. Germany had, however, in the meanwhile despatched Dr. Nachtigal to West Africa to forestall the British Consul, and the latter found himself too late by a few days to raise the Union Jack in the Cameroons, only saving the Oil Rivers by the merest good luck. It is easy to be wise now, but had a little wisdom been shown a few years ago Great Britain would have been saved an immensity of trouble, and the map of Africa would be very different from what it is at the present day.

Like France, Germany had hopes of ousting us from our Niger heritage, and early in 1885 Herr Flegel was

despatched to the Niger to endeavour to secure Sokoto and Gando; but the National African Company, with more foresight than the British Government, checkmated the Germans by sending out Mr. Joseph Thomson, who succeeded in concluding treaties with the two great empires before Herr Flegel arrived in the country. After this, though she continued to join in agitating against the Royal Niger Company's methods, Germany did nothing that can be considered underhand.

The spheres of influence originally assigned to Germany were somewhat more definite than those assigned to Great Britain and France, and no great difficulty has arisen as to boundaries, though lengthy negotiations and various agreements between Germany and Great Britain and between Germany and France have been necessary to complete everything satisfactorily. The Anglo-German Agreement, signed at Berlin, July 1st, 1890,* ratified all former agreements, and defined the boundaries between the Gold Coast and Togoland, and the boundary between the Niger Protectorate and the Cameroons. Article IV., par. 2, and Article V. ran as follows:—

ARTICLE IV.

In West Africa:—

2. It having been proved to the satisfaction of the two Powers that no river exists in the Gulf of Guinea corresponding with that marked on maps as the Rio del Rey, to which reference was made in the Agreement of 1885, a provisional line of demarcation is adopted between the German sphere in the Cameroons and the adjoining British sphere, which, starting from the head of the Rio del Rey creek, goes direct to the point, about $9^{\circ} 8'$ of east longitude, marked "Rapids" in the British Admiralty Chart.

ARTICLE V.

It is agreed that no treaty or agreement, made by or on behalf of either Power, to the north of the river Benué shall

* By this agreement, it will be remembered, Germany recognised the British protectorate over the dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar, and Great Britain ceded Heligoland to Germany.

interfere with the free passage of goods of the other Power, without payment of transit dues, to and from the shores of Lake Chad.

All treaties made in territories intervening between the Benué and Lake Chad shall be notified by one Power to the other.

At the Berlin Conference (1885) the Anglo-German boundary was described roughly as running from the Rio del Rey to the Rapids on the Cross River; in 1886 this line was extended north-east to a point about thirty miles east of Yola on the Benué River, and finally, in 1893, a further extension of the boundary line was agreed to as follows:—

From a point on the Benué thirty miles above Yola to the point where the thirteenth degree of longitude east of Greenwich is intersected by the tenth degree of north latitude; thence to a point on the southern shore of Lake Chad situated thirty-five minutes east of the meridian of the centre of the town of Kuka, this being the distance between the meridian of Kuka and the fourteenth meridian east of Greenwich, measured on the map published by the German Kolonial Atlas of 1892. So far, therefore, as Anglo-German boundaries in the neighbourhood of Nigeria are concerned, there seems to be little likelihood of trouble arising.

Before concluding, however, we must mention the final agreement as to their respective boundaries in the neighbourhood of Lake Chad between France and Germany (1894), which was approved by Great Britain, and which, therefore, once and for all, prevented the extension of British influence eastwards in the direction of Darfur and the Nile provinces. By this agreement France was enabled (at any rate on paper) to realise her dream of connecting her Mediterranean possessions with the French Congo, and she, moreover, acquired an outlet for her Chad region trade by the Kebbi-Benué-Niger route. Such an outlet France considered of vital importance, and she, therefore, insisted on pushing her boundary westward, so as to touch

the highest navigable point on the Kebbi* river, by which means (and with the freedom of navigation of the Benué and Lower Niger) she could convey her products to the sea—a distance of a thousand miles or more. The Franco-German boundaries thus arrived at will be seen marked on the map.

* This point is the village of Bifara, which no Frenchman or German had visited up to 1894. It was located on the map of Africa by the author of this book, who made a track survey of the Kebbi River when it was first explored by Major Claude MacDonald. *Vide* "Proceedings R. Geog. Soc." Vol. XIII. ; 1891, page 449.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR CUSTOMS.

Hamitic, Negroid, and Negro—Where the Classification fails—The Kruboy—"The Irishman of West Africa"—His Peculiar Lingo—His Love of Home—The Pagan Tribes of Southern Nigeria—Pagan Manners and Customs—West African Occupations—Dress and Adornment—The Family System—Marriage Customs—Burial Rites—"The Nature of an Oath" in West Africa.

CUST* divides the races of Africa linguistically—a system which has many points in its favour, but is not entirely satisfactory, and in a country such as Nigeria, which has been overrun at different periods by various wandering peoples, is not by any means reliable. Still, if grouping by language is not to be depended upon, the same may be said of any other classification of the present inhabitants of British Nigeria, for a long period of inter-marriage between members of widely different races has resulted in the defacement of distinctive peculiarities. This applies more particularly to the tribes dwelling at some considerable distance from the coast, who have been influenced by the immigration of such people as the Fulahs. As far as the indigenous pagan negro is concerned there is little difficulty, and in those parts still untouched by the Mohammedan invader the various aboriginal tribes can be grouped both according to their language and to their general outward appearance.

The most popular method of classifying the natives of this portion of Africa is under three heads, viz. Hamitic, Negroid, and Negro. The Hamites are supposed to have had their origin in south-western Asia, to have immigrated into Africa at some unknown time, and to be represented

* "A Sketch of the Modern Languages of Africa," by R. N. Cust; 1883.

in the Western Sudan by the Berber division of the Libyan group, to which, as previously pointed out, possibly belong the Fulahs, the Bornus, and the Borgus. The Negroid is the link between the Hamite and the Negro, resulting from intermarriage, while the Negro is the West African pure and simple, whose blood has remained unadulterated by the foreigner. This classification is, at first sight, clear enough; but an element of confusion appears when we find negroes described as "sons of Ham," and Mohammedans in general spoken of as "Arabs." Practically we have only to deal with Hamites, Negroes, and a cross between the two—the first and last wholly Mohammedan,* the Negro in the main pagan, though, where he has been conquered, Mohammedan. As to languages, the Hamites of this part of Africa have only two—Fulah and Tibu; the Negroids two—Hausa and Kanuri,† while the Negroes speak a diversity of distinct languages and innumerable dialects. Of the Fulahs and Hausas perhaps enough has been said in former chapters, and, being Mohammedans, they have no strange customs worth mentioning; the tribes which we propose discussing may, therefore, be summed up as pagan negroes.‡

Although the Kroo- or Kru-man§ is not in reality a native of Nigeria, or indeed of *British* West Africa, he is so intimately connected with everything relating to the West Coast that he is worthy of taking his place among

* The Borgus are not Mohammedans, but it is uncertain if they can be called Hamites.

† In Bornu, *vide* Chapter X.

‡ The list does not pretend to be exhaustive, and only the better known tribes are dealt with.

§ Kru is a contraction of Krao. "A small tribe living about half-way between Cape Mesurado and Cape Palmas, about twenty-five miles above, or to the north-west of, the latter. The district extends about twenty or thirty miles along the coast, and perhaps as much into the interior. They had originally five chief settlements, which, beginning from the north-west, are Little Kru; Settra Kru, the chief town; Krubah; Nanna Kru, or Kru Settrah; and King Will's Town."—*Burton*. The usual tribal marking of the Kru people is a broad black band tattooed down the forehead.

the African subjects of Great Britain. He is, as a rule, the first native with whom the Englishman comes in contact, as gangs of Krumen are taken on board all men-of-war and mail steamers immediately on arrival on the coast. Burton says of him that he was created for the palm-oil trade, and as paddler, labourer, and general servant he is found wherever there is a colony of white men. Without the "Kruboys," life in these regions would be bereft of almost all its charms, or at any rate of one of its greatest sources of amusement, for the queer members of this unique tribe furnish the English exile with many a mirthful moment—and at times when mirth comes not too readily. Probably there exists no people in the world in whose composition are gathered so many opposite characteristics. In physique they are perfect models of manly strength, yet for fighting purposes they are absolutely useless, having been proved time after time to be arrant cowards. As servants, they are most hard-working and loyal, though while protecting their masters from the extortions of other natives, they will not hesitate to rob them freely themselves. Again, to meet them on British territory, they appear to be thoroughly civilised and friendly; yet instances have occurred of British vessels being wrecked on their coast, when they have proved themselves to be the veriest savages, their terrible greed for loot overcoming everything, although every nian had, at one time or other, served Europeans as a faithful servant. The ordinary Englishman, however, sees more of their good points than of their bad; shipwrecks on the Kru coast are fortunately rare, and it is seldom that Kruboys are called upon to fight even in self-defence; while petty theft and dishonesty are things which, though annoying, can be guarded against. Possibly the Nigger Minstrel had his origin in the Kruboy, for few other natives of the coast are of a particularly witty nature, whereas the Kruboy is full of chaff and wit—"the Irishman of West Africa," as he has been called. Like the Chinaman, he has an English of his own, and there is a certain fascination for the newly arrived Englishman in picking up this African "pidgin" jargon—he

has the satisfaction of feeling that he has learnt a new language without having recourse to any lengthy Ollendorffian process. Many of their words are derived from the Portuguese,* and though their vocabulary is very limited, they can always make themselves understood to Englishmen, their rendering of the language, quaint as it is, being thoroughly expressive.†

The peculiarity of this small tribe is their great love of home; their women refuse to travel, consequently the men go away only for short periods of time. They hire themselves out in gangs under a headman, who makes the bargain with the employer, and who is responsible for the service and behaviour of the gang; the engagement generally being for "One time yam come up, twel' moon." The home-coming of the Kruboy after the performance of his service is one of the most interesting sights to be witnessed on the West Coast. As the steamer conveying the Kruboy's nears their homes—Cavally, Cape Palmas, Grand Cess, or whatever the place may be—a gun is fired, when immediately scores of canoes shoot out from the shore and come alongside. The steamer "lies to" for a few minutes, and the Kruboy's throw their year's earnings (guns, powder, bales of cloth, etc.) into the canoes

* The commonest Kru-English words are *sabby* (know) and *palaver* (talk), both of Portuguese origin. *Palaver* has developed into a wider meaning, resembling the Chinaman's "pidgin," *i.e.* business.

† What could be more expressive than "Sweet mouf palaver" for blarney, "fool palaver" for nonsense, "sarce palaver" for abusive language, "God-man palaver" for missionary teaching? Or what could be simpler than their proverb, "One day no be all day," equivalent to "It's a long lane that has no turning"? The word "lib" (live) has, by an attempt to reproduce the native idiom, assumed a peculiar and important character in Kru-English, and varies considerably in its meaning; thus, for a servant to tell a caller that his master "no lib" merely implies that he is not at home, and in this sense the word is used freely for animate or inanimate things. Another use of "lib," is in conjunction with the word "for," when its meaning is quite different. "He lib for go we-country" signifies that a certain Kruboy has returned to his native land; "lib for die," that he is dead.

or into the water, then go overboard themselves into a canoe if one is handy, otherwise into the sea—it appears to matter little which. Everyone yells and jabbers and laughs, and by the time the home-comers have reached the shore they have probably had all their goods appropriated by the occupants of other canoes; yet, so long as the community gets the earnings of its members, everybody is thoroughly satisfied.

In Southern Nigeria there dwell numerous pagan tribes, speaking a variety of languages, but since they have never been thoroughly studied by ethnological experts, it is impossible to classify them otherwise than according to the localities in which they dwell and the languages which they speak. What relation one tribe bears to another will probably never be known, and the most that we can hope to do is to forget the past and deal with the various peoples as we find them. In the neighbourhood of Benin the people are known as Binis; eastward come the Sobos; and, between the latter and the sea, the great Jakri tribe. In the Niger Delta are found the Idzos, or Ijos (with several off-shoots), and the Ibos, who are sub-divided into many minor tribes; while in the eastern division of the Southern Protectorate are a great variety of people, though mostly allied in language with the Ibos. Among the more important of the Ibo tribes in this part of the country are the Aros, who inhabit fourteen towns, encircling the site of the recently destroyed “Long Juju.” Captain Venour says that the Aros are intimately connected with the Inokuns, the only difference between them being that every true Aro must be “free-born on both sides for seven generations,” and that the term Inokun is applied to those members of the same tribe whose pedigrees will not bear a careful scrutiny. In the immediate neighbourhood of Old Calabar the inhabitants belong to the Efik race, supposed by some authorities to be connected with the Ibos, but by others to be a distinct people; to the north and north-west the tribes are almost entirely pure Ibos; while in the country watered by the Upper Cross River the language of the people shows traces of a

connection with Bantu.* With regard to the pagan tribes of other parts of British Nigeria,† in ascending the Lower Niger from the sea, three distinct tribes‡ are met with, viz. the Idzos§ (including the Orus), the Ibos,|| and the Igaras, whose country on the left bank extends as far north as the Niger-Benué confluence. West of Lokoja, in the bend of the Middle and Lower Niger, dwell several pagan tribes—the Kukurukus, Igbiras, Ogidis, Owurus, Bunus, Yagbas, and others; while of the pagan Nupés¶ and Borgus we have already spoken.

Passing from Lokoja, up the Benué River, we find that Mohammedan influence is hard at work, and few of the pagan tribes are now wholly independent, though, with the assistance of British protection, they are still enabled to keep their countries. The Igbira tribe inhabits the country surrounding the confluence, then come the Basas on the right bank, and the Akpotos on the left, followed by the Aragos and the Mitshis (or Munshis). Further up stream lies the Juko country, and higher still, in the upper reaches of the Benué, are the numerous and wild Batta tribes, the Dugaris, Ligaris, Bulas, Basamas, Tangeles, and others.** Many of these Niger people speak

* Sir H. H. Johnston calls the languages of these tribes *Semi-Bantu*. Bantu proper commences a little to the east of British territory—i.e. in the German Cameroons.

† A more detailed account of the tribes inhabiting the banks of the Niger and Benué Rivers will be found in "Up the Niger."

‡ It would perhaps be more correct to use the word *nation* when speaking of the main tribes.

§ Ijo, Ijau, Ejo, Jo.

|| Minor tribes: Asabas, Onitshas, Okos, Atanis, Akris, Odekwes, Osipitis, 'Nsubes, Umweris, 'Nteges, Anams, etc.

¶ The aborigines of Nupé are said to be represented now by the Agabis, Ebes, Kpantis, Kakwanchis, Kupachis, and the Kedechis (Ganagas), the latter being the ferrymen and hippopotamus hunters of the country.

** All the pagan tribes enumerated are lawless cut-throats and robbers. The Tangeles live in the hills between Gombé and Gataré, and are said to be cannibals. They are of fine physique, but repulsive in appearance, and wear no clothes. A man cannot marry until he can produce the heads of six men killed with his own hand.

distinct languages (with various dialects), the principal of which, so far as they have been investigated, being Idzo, Ibo, Igara, Igbira, Mitshi, Juko, and Battawa. In addition to these, there are the three important languages—Nupé, Fulah, and Hausa—the last-named understood by nearly every native in the country. Of the numerous dialects, in many cases differing widely from the parent tongue we may mention that languages resembling Yoruba are spoken by several of the tribes inhabiting the country westward of Lokoja, while many Yoruba words are met with in the Igara language. Dialects of Nupé are also found among the outlying tribes of Nupé proper.

In treating of pagan manners and customs, it should be borne in mind, once and for all, that their customs are altogether based on religious motives,* while their mode of living, where it is uninfluenced by religion, is that of man in the earliest stages of emancipation from barbarism, or not unfrequently of man living in a state of actual barbarism. The tribes vary in the scale of so-called civilisation according to their situation, and according to the length of time they have had intercourse with Europeans, for, although it is true that, in the main, the coast tribes have altered little within the last four centuries, still, in comparison with the more inland pagans, they certainly hold enlightened views. At the same time it must be acknowledged that with this enlightenment has grown up a measure of vice—drunkenness and a low state of morality—non-existent among the more primitive pagan peoples of the interior. In an enormous tract of country like that under discussion, the ways of the natives, of course, differ very considerably, and in the few pages of one short chapter we can do no more than generalise, leaving the reader, who is so inclined, to study the anthropological and ethnological details of the tribes in the works of travellers who have devoted their attention to one or two distinct peoples.†

* *Vide* Chapter XVI.

† An interesting account of the natives of the Oil Rivers, compiled by M. le Comte de Cardi, is given in Appendix I. of "West African Studies," by Miss Mary Kingsley; London, 1899.

Physically, the negro dwelling on the coast is inferior to his brother of the interior, an exception, perhaps, being the Kruman, who can hold his own in strength and proportions with the members of almost any African tribe.* The reason generally given for this inferiority in the coast natives is their craving for drink, with which for several generations they have been abundantly supplied by the European trader; but, though possibly this may have something to say to it, the fact should not be forgotten that the climate of the coast is almost as baneful to the black man as to the white. The native born and bred in the swamps does not become acclimatised to his surroundings, but suffers from fevers and other diseases altogether unknown to the tribes of the interior. With regard to the huts† in which the people dwell, we may say briefly that their architecture is of a very simple description, and depending almost entirely on the building material afforded by the particular part of the country. The rule is that the natives live in families, a certain number of families constituting a community or village, and a certain number of villages again forming what is generally termed a tribe. Each family, with the household slaves and attendants, lives apart, on the patriarchal system; and the group of huts wherein the family has its abode is usually surrounded by some kind of enclosure wall. The ground plan of the hut may be either rectangular or circular, the former usually found near the coast, the latter in the interior, though why one should be preferred by certain tribes to the other has never been discovered. The materials used in their construction are always very similar, the walls being either of mud or wicker-work, or, occasionally,

* There is one peculiarity about the Kruman's physique: above the waist his muscular development is almost Herculean, but his legs are decidedly weakly in appearance.

† The furniture usually found in the native huts consists of nothing more than a few stools, some cooking pots, and mats and skins. In some parts they build seats and couches of mud, and the Nupés sleep on beds of hardened mud under which are charcoal fires;

a combination of the two (wattle and daub), and the roof always of thatch*—sometimes palm leaves, sometimes grass or reeds.

The natural occupations of all West Africans are agriculture and commerce, though owing to the fact that in many parts water forms the sole means of communication in the country, such employments as canoe-building and paddling are adopted by a considerable proportion of the inhabitants; and the craft of fishing is also much pursued. Among the industrial tribes we find weaving, dyeing, working in leather, brass, and other metal, iron smelting, ivory carving, pottery making, and elephant and hippopotamus hunting—all followed as regular professions.† There are few tribes that are not periodically at war with their neighbours, and in such parts as are adjacent to the Mohammedan States every pagan goes about his business armed with flint-lock, sword, dagger, shield, bow and poisoned arrows, spears, or some other weapons of defence, at all times dreading the raid of the conquering people. Towns and villages are frequently found fortified in various ways to resist attack, though this state of turmoil is gradually passing away before the steady advance of British authority. As a matter of fact, the pagans, with, perhaps, a few exceptions, would willingly settle down to peaceful pursuits were they sure of protection; and members of many of the tribes, with very little encouragement, would become skilled artisans—workers in metals, leather, and sundry other things.‡

* Some of the pagan tribes in such outlying districts as the upper reaches of the Benué River plaster their roofs with mud; and in large towns, like Kano and Kuka, flat roofs of mud are found, though these have been introduced chiefly by Arab traders from North Africa.

† There are few pastoral tribes among the true aboriginal negroes, principally for the reason that cattle do not thrive near the coast; the pagans of the interior keep herds and flocks, but only to supply their own wants, and the Bororogi, or wandering Fulahs, still retain their position as a great pastoral people. The pagan Basamas (Benue River) are great cattle breeders.

‡ The Nupés and Yorubas in particular.

The dress of the people varies with the locality which they inhabit, the amount of clothes worn depending, as a rule, on the proximity of the tribe to a Mission Station, trading station, or to the Mohammedan country. Removed from these influences, the pagan goes almost naked, though even amongst the wildest tribes most of the men and married women wear some description of waist-cloth made of bark, skins, or other material. The absence of clothing is, however, made up for in a measure by personal adornment, more especially in the matter of the hair, to which immense attention is paid, not only by the women, but also by the men. The more civilised of the women—in the neighbourhood of European factories—bind the head with a gaudy silk bandana, but the *coiffure* of the more remote tribes is frequently more elaborate. The woolly nature of the hair makes it difficult to manipulate, but with the aid of a stiffening of camwood, palm-oil, and clay some astounding results are produced. Thus the women of one tribe will be found wearing the hair hanging in countless small plaits, others with plaits wound round the crown of the head and a knob at the back; but the commonest fashion is to raise the hair above the head in various patterns. Some of the women wear two or three conical tufts of hair with the spaces between them carefully shaved; while the Inokuns and women of other tribes on the Cross River train the hair into a crest, a foot or more in height, falling at the back below the level of the ears in the shape of a fan, the whole structure being as hard as wood.* These are only a few examples, and scarcely two tribes dress the hair alike. In some parts the women pay no regard to their hair, either cropping it short or allowing it to grow at will, and where this occurs the men of the tribe appear to be doubly particular about their own hair, shaving it in fantastic patterns so as to resemble a chess-board, and raising a stiffened tuft of wool from each division. Negroes seldom grow hair on the face, but occasionally the men of a tribe may be noticed

* Hairpins of carved ivory, bone, or wood are stuck into the hair in nearly all cases.

wearing carefully cultivated tufts on the chin, which give them a most diabolical appearance.*

The principal ornaments worn are rings, necklaces, bracelets, or bangles, armlets and anklets, and earrings. In Nigeria it is very exceptional to find ornaments of either gold or silver, though, here and there, trading women are met with wearing English silver coins set as rings. Coral necklaces are much affected by the wealthier chiefs, and such men as Nana, on State occasions, often wear three or four hundred pounds' worth of coral round their necks.† Beads of European manufacture are much in request for necklaces, and the different kinds are carefully classified according to shape, colour,‡ and size by the natives. Barth tells us that he collected the native names for over thirty varieties, and this probably does not represent one-fourth of the number, for the great traveller's observations were confined to the Sudan. Cowries sometimes take the place of beads for ornamentation, being strung together or sewn on to cloth, and in the Oil Rivers unmarried girls wear nothing but a single string of cowries round the hips. For earrings long cylindrical beads of opal and cornelian are popular among the women of many tribes; bracelets of iron, ivory, copper, brass, or glass;§ armlets (worn above the elbow) of the same materials—more usually seen on the men than on the women; and, in the matter of anklets, we may mention three curious varieties worn by the women of different tribes of the Niger Delta. The wealthier of the trading women wear massive anklets|| of ivory, formed from a hollowed tusk, through which the foot has to be passed before it has stopped

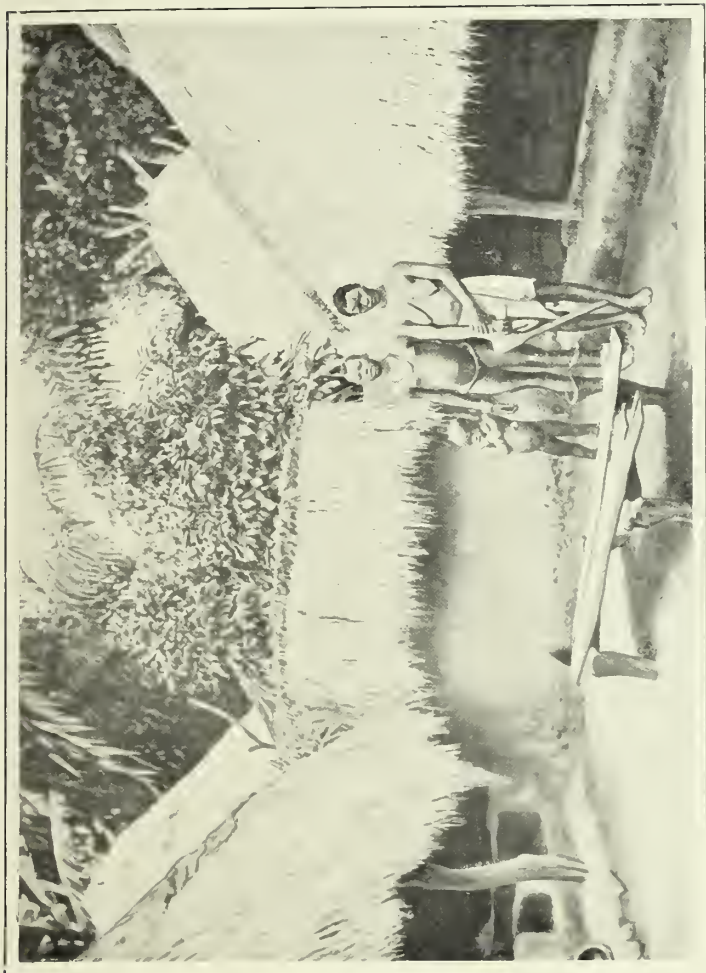
* Mohammedan men shave the head and grow scanty beards. Nigerian Fulah women usually wear their hair in plaits, while Nupé and Hausa women affect a large helmet-shaped arrangement. Mandingos and Western Fulahs of both sexes wear long hanging plaits.

† All purchased from European traders.

‡ The colour denotes the wearer's particular leity.

§ The Nupés are experts in fusing glass, and make bangles out of old bottles.

|| Often six or eight inches deep.



PAGANS OF SOUTH NIGERIA
ANAMBARA RIVER.

Photo Mr. G. F. Packer.

growing. The weight of the ivory is, of course, very considerable ; but it is nothing in comparison with the weight of the anklets worn by the girls and women of the Anambara country ; those of the former consist of brass rods* formed into a huge spiral spring from ankle to knee ; while those of the latter are even more cumbersome, being cymbal-like plates of brass, often more than a foot in diameter. These are welded round the woman's ankles on her marriage, and are never removed, causing her to walk with a most awkward gait, and allowing her but little comfort in life. Necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and other ornaments, however, are not worn entirely for the purpose of beautifying the person, but usually as a charm against one or other of the various evil spirits which infest the land,† and on occasions of religious festivals the adornments are largely increased, the hair and skin being dyed and stained in different colours.

Tattooing the face, shoulders, and arms is also a common method of ornamentation,‡ and by a peculiar process the flesh is raised in regular patterns, looking at a little distance not unlike crochet-work. In addition to this, there is the distinctive tribal marking,§ consisting of a certain number and form of gashes generally on the face, by which anyone with a knowledge of the matter can tell at a glance to what tribe a man belongs. This marking is done in youth, and the operation must be most painful, since the cuts are deep, and into them is rubbed some colouring matter, to render them permanent. A complete list of the tribal markings would be of considerable interest, but so far little attention has been paid to the subject, and photography fails to reproduce the different lines

* Brass rods (resembling stair-rods) are an article of import, and have for many years been a currency in the country, about one hundred and twenty rods being valued at 23s. to 30s.

† *Vide* Chapter XVI.

‡ There is no attempt at pictorial effect, such as is found in Japan or Burmah.

§ Mohammedans have a great horror of this practice, which they call *shusua*.

with accuracy.* This is the more to be regretted, because the custom will probably die out as the tribes become civilised.

That the negro does not overwork himself is, perhaps, true, yet he has to work hard enough to earn a living ; to sow and gather in his crops ; to obtain food by fishing or hunting ; to weave or work in metals ; or to collect the natural products of the country for barter to the European merchants. On the women falls the heaviest share of the daily work ; their duties are to prepare the food of the household, to look after the hut, to do all the marketing and carry the produce to the factories, while they may be seen (with their babies slung on their backs) toiling in the fields or paddling canoes on the rivers from sunrise to sunset. The wonderful fertility of the soil makes agriculture easy, and so plentiful are the crops that it is doubtful if any part of Nigeria has ever known a famine, or even a scarcity of food supply. The family system has been previously referred to, and to such an extent is this carried that a village or community amounts to a small co-operative society. The individual is sunk in the family, village, or tribe ; and among most tribes the land is held by families in common. On the death of the head of the family, the children inherit in equal shares, and should one of them desire to alienate his portion, he can only do so to a member of his own tribe ; while, in the event of there being no children to inherit, the property passes to the community. In many parts succession is through the female, *e.g.* when a man dies his children do not succeed, but the property is taken by the children of his sister. A chief explains the reason thus : “ My sister’s children are my blood relations, but whether the children my wives bear are so or not I cannot tell.”†

These native laws are interesting as showing the stage of civilisation at which the various tribes have arrived,

* A survival of this practice is to be found in India, where the painted caste-marks are possibly merely a substitute for the tribal cuts.

† *Edinburgh Juridical Review*, July, 1889.

and, although such matters as ceremonials at births, marriages, and deaths are more intimately associated with religion than with anything else, it will not, perhaps, be out of place to describe them here. With regard to the ceremonies attending the birth of an infant, among most of the tribes it is customary to call in the priest some time before the child is born, so that the woman may be adorned with anklets, bracelets, and necklaces of sacred beads, as charms against evil spirits. Charms, also, are fastened to the child immediately it comes into the world, and a name is conferred on it—generally that of the particular deity worshipped by the child's parents. This is only the first name, and a second is given later, when a cleansing corresponding to our baptism takes place. "The water which is always in the earthen vessels placed before the images of the gods, is brought to the house and thrown up on the thatched roof, and as it drips down from the eaves the mother and child pass three times through the falling drops. The priest next makes a water of purification with which he bathes the child's head; he repeats three times the name by which the infant is to be known, and then holds him in his arms so that his feet touch the ground. After these ceremonies have been duly performed the fire is extinguished, and the embers carried away; the house is then carefully swept out, live coals are brought, and a fresh fire lighted. We thus appear to have a combination of a purification by water and a purification by fire."* Certain births are considered unlucky; in the Niger Delta, for instance, a woman who bears twins is proclaimed an outcast, and her offspring destroyed. Children who cut their upper teeth first are also supposed to be under evil influence, and are made away with, and the child of a mother dying in giving it birth is buried alive. But these superstitions are not universal, for in some districts twins are considered the greatest good luck; and whereas some tribes offer up albino babies as a sacrifice to their gods, others reverence them.†

* *Ellis*.

† All these inhuman practices are gradually being swept away.

Marriage is a rite held in high esteem by all the pagan tribes, and though, where the priesthood is all-powerful, the ceremonies are more or less of a religious nature, originally it was a purely social institution. The actual ceremonies differ somewhat among the various tribes; but there are always the proposal, the betrothal, and the marriage festivities, in some form or other. When an unbetrothed girl arrives at the age of puberty, she advertises the fact by decking herself out in her best clothes and ornaments, and parading the town or village, accompanied by a bevy of girls. This usually produces a suitor, who makes his offer of marriage to the girl's parents by means of one of his friends. The price to be paid for the girl is arranged on business lines, and when this matter has been satisfactorily settled, a betrothal of long or short duration takes place, during which time the intended bride is carefully fattened up by her relatives.* As the wedding day approaches the bridegroom prepares the feast, sending presents of tobacco and intoxicating liquor to all the bride's relations and friends, bidding them to the feast. At the appointed hour the bride is escorted to the house of the bridegroom, where she is formally handed over by her parents, after which feasting, dancing, and revelry are kept up for a considerable length of time. Sometimes betrothals take place at a very early age, and the bridegroom has to wait several years for his bride, but, in this case, all payments are made on the engagement taking place, and when the girl becomes marriageable, she is conducted to her future husband's house without further ceremony.

Anything like love,† as we understand the term, is altogether unknown to the African; women are regarded

* The negro estimates a woman's beauty by her corpulence and the glossy blackness of her skin.

† "Lovers never kiss one another, nor do mothers kiss their babes, for the practice is to them quite unmeaning. The people of the sea-coast towns have invented a verb to describe the process (which they have heard of from Europeans), viz. *fewfahnu*, which means, literally, 'to suck mouth.'"—Ellis.

as property, and the more wives a man is able to possess, the greater his importance in the eyes of his friends. Modesty and chastity are qualities which have small place in African life, though infidelity on the part of a wife is subject to the most rigid laws. Adultery is punishable almost at the will of the injured husband, who can demand compensation from the paramour, sell him into slavery, or even slay him ; while the penalties imposed on the guilty wife extend from simple divorce to death. Polygamy is universal, the first wife being the mistress of the household, and, curiously enough, the wives encourage their husband to take more wives, and even concubines. There is no question of jealousy, as each wife has her separate hut in the compound, and the greater number of wives a man has the easier their lives, for the position of wife is no better than that of servant or labourer, each one having her apportioned daily work, be it in the household, the field, or the market. To show what a low state of morality really exists, even among the semi-civilised tribes, we may mention that it is considered no disgrace for a man to lend one of his wives to another man, or for a wife to be so lent ; while trading on the intrigues of a wife is by no means an unpopular method of enrichment.

Burials are attended throughout West African pagandom with immense ceremony, the death of a chief or other individual of rank being the occasion for the wildest debauchery ; and, beyond the limits of direct British authority, many barbarous rites are practised. Let us first describe what occurs in places where such things as human sacrifices have long been put down. As death draws nigh, the members of the family assemble round the dying man to hear his last wishes as to the disposal of his property, and, as soon as he is dead, wild lamentations burst from the women, who rush forth from the house, proclaiming the news with wails and shrieks. The corpse is then dressed in the deceased's best clothes and ornaments, and propped up to receive the mourners, who offer it meat and drink. Each party of mourners, as it arrives in front of the house, fires a salute of musketry amidst beating of drums and loud

expressions of grief, presents of various kinds[‡] being given by the mourners to the dead man's relatives. A general fast is proclaimed from the moment of death until the body is interred (usually two or three days), but this does not include abstention from liquor, so that by the time the actual burial takes place everyone is in an advanced state of intoxication. The native custom is to bury a man under the floor of his house, but this is forbidden (for sanitary reasons) in the coast towns, and the grave is consequently prepared outside. Superstition does not permit of the corpse being carried through a door, and a hole for its egress has to be made in the wall. In the coffin with the body are placed many valuable ornaments, clothes, food, tobacco, rum, etc., to accompany the deceased to the other world, for the idea is held that all these articles have spirits capable of following the spirit of the man into the unknown.* For a similar purpose sacrifices of sheep, goats, and fowls are made at the grave-side, and the interment is announced by salvoes of musketry. Gin and rum are freely distributed, and drinking and feasting are indulged in for a length of time depending on the importance of the deceased. Neither is this the end of all things, for periodical celebrations of the burial, with attendant debauches, are customary, and portions of food and drink are daily placed by the side of the tomb.† The position in which the corpse is laid in its last resting-place varies considerably, some tribes burying the body upright, some sitting, others lying on its side.

The funeral rites among those pagan tribes who dwell at a safe distance from the British official are replete with enormities—including cannibalism and human sacrifices. Such things still go on *sub rosa* within the British sphere of influence, but, when detected and brought to book, all who have connived at them suffer the extreme penalty as murderers. Prior to our administration of the country,

* *Vide* Chapter XVI.

† Some sort of shed is generally erected over the tomb: The Ibibios (Cross River) build two small mud chambers by the side of the tomb, for the use of the spirit of the deceased:

the burial of no pagan chief was considered to be sufficiently celebrated unless a certain number of his wives and slaves were buried with him, in order that he might enter on his new life accompanied by attendants befitting his rank. This cannot be compared with the *suttee*, or self-immolation of the Hindoo widow, as neither the widows nor the slaves of the African chief ever desired to offer themselves as sacrifices. On the contrary, no sooner was the death of a chief known than all his wives and slaves immediately attempted to effect their escape, to frustrate which the death was concealed until the requisite number of victims had been secured. The sacrifice of human beings is in itself horrible enough, but it becomes doubly horrible when we know with what revolting cruelties it is even now in some outlying parts accompanied, and it seems almost impossible to conceive that any people can be so degraded as to permit such atrocities to take place. Yet there are, to-day, within a day's journey of a British court-house, places in Nigeria where, on the death of a chief, scores of innocent men and women are cast alive into the grave, their legs and arms being broken to prevent escape ; where victims are brought forth and slain, and then eaten by the mourners ; and where the sacrifice of virgins is considered as the highest honour to the dead. Ellis* maintains that these human sacrifices are not due to any inherent bloodthirstiness, but to an exaggerated regard for the dead. " Even years after a man's death slaves and captives are sometimes sacrificed to his memory, in the belief that their ghosts will swell the throng of his attendants." But it is not only at funerals that human sacrifices take place, for among the priest-ridden tribes periodical sacrifices are offered to the gods, for the purpose of staying or averting some great calamity. Albino children and young girls are offered as sacrifices to sharks, or prior to a great palaver ; slaves are slaughtered at the new moon, and at all religious festivals ; while the murders committed at the instigation of the priests, for the glorification of

* " The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast."¹

themselves and their gods, are of the most wanton description.

Coming to the matter of oaths, the oath of allegiance or friendship is taken before several witnesses in a prescribed form. In some districts the principal ceremony performed by the parties is the washing of each other's feet. Among the tribes inland from Opobo a goat is brought out before the two parties, its head is struck off at one blow, and the blood smeared with the fingers over the forehead and breast of all present, after which pieces of raw flesh are crammed by one party into the mouths of the other. Captain Roupell, D.S.O., gives the following account* of the ceremony of "blood brotherhood" as performed in the country of the Upper Cross River: "The chopping of *imbiam* or doctor is the native form of oath, the ceremony of which is as follows: Four, six, or eight young men from each tribe being selected, sit down facing each other; one man from each tribe rises and clasps the other's right hand, fingers interlacing; a mutual friend then lances the wrist of each until the blood flows freely; a grain of Indian corn, one of Guinea corn, and a piece of kola-nut are brought and rubbed in the blood of each; this being done, the two men each eat the corn and nut and blood off the other's wrist. They then repeat an oath to the effect that he who harms or takes gun against his brother—which the other man now considers himself to be—may be killed by the forest god if he goes into the forest; if he go by water, may he die by water; if he take fire to cook, may the fire kill him, and so forth. They then hug each other and are placed back to back, when the native administering the oath separates them by dropping some earth between them. Palm wine being then produced, they sip alternately from the same glass. This form of oath is considered so binding that the bad characters are among those selected to partake of it, being those most likely to bring trouble on the rest of the tribe. It is supposed to be binding as long as the actual parties

* "Foreign Office, 1897, Annual Series: Africa, No: 1834."

to whom it is administered live.” It is also the custom in some parts to take a religious oath, a particular god being named; in this case a small portion of water, earth, &c., from the spot where the god is supposed to reside is swallowed by the person taking the oath.

The Kruboy is sworn thus: Some salt is placed in the palm of his hand, and the person administering the oath takes the witness's hand and says:—

This salt that you are going to take,
The words you are going to talk,
Are in the fear of God!
If you talk lies,
This salt will cut your belly.

The witness then swallows the salt.*

In the Oil Rivers there are various methods of administering the oath to a witness. A Jakri man swears on a bundle of sticks; but the more important chiefs of the rivers further east, when desirous of giving evidence, go through a most solemn and lengthy operation. An officer of the court has to accompany the chief to his house, where the juju-man and all the slaves of the household are assembled round the tomb of the father of the witness, who proceeds to “swear juju.” Prayers are repeated in a loud voice, offerings are made, and at intervals the chief perambulates the tomb, banging his “boys” about with a pestle-like weapon with which he is armed. Eventually he turns to the official, and signifies that the oath has been taken in the simple words, “Done swear him!” †

Similar forms of oath are employed in native courts of law, though the remote tribes still adopt ordeal to settle everything. A poisonous decoction of sass-wood, Calabar bean, or other ingredient is prepared, and the accused is called upon to partake of the bowl to prove his innocence.

* It should be observed that in these pagan oaths the punishment dreaded for perjury is altogether of a temporal nature, no mention being made of future condemnation. See Chapter XVI.

† Mohammedans, as a rule, swear on the Koran, though some (e.g. from Lagos) kiss the blade of a sword held across the face.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that the guilt or innocence of the party depends entirely on the strength of the poison, and on the goodwill or otherwise of the individual who prepares it. The people of Brass employ the feather ordeal, in which the feather from a fowl's wing is thrust through the accused's tongue by the juju-man. If the quill breaks before penetrating the tongue the man is innocent; if it can be pushed right through, he is guilty. Trial by ordeal is, of course, forbidden by the British authorities, and, considering everything, the native laws (when supervised by our officials) are as just as can be expected. But in a land where a vicious priesthood is all-powerful, and where superstition is rife, it is impossible that what we consider justice can exist.

CHAPTER XV.

SLAVERY.

Domestic Slavery—Its Abuses—Slave-raiding—The Old Slave Trade—Mohammedan Raiders—Slave Tribute—Carriers—Currency—Improvement of Communications—Railways and Roads—Money—Dollars—Laird's Coins—Slaves required for Human Sacrifices—Legal *status* of Slavery—Prospects of Abolition.

FROM time immemorial the native of Africa has been a slave ; the institution of domestic social slavery is part and parcel of the black man's life. He himself sees nothing outrageous nor even extraordinary in the mere fact of being held in bondage. The Koran expressly permits the Faithful to possess domestic slaves, and though to our notions the mere institution of slavery is abhorrent, yet in reality it compares very favourably (certainly among the African Mohammedans) with the slavery of ancient Rome or with the serfdom existing in our own country but a few centuries ago.* It is not, however, with this domestic servitude that we are so much concerned as with the abuses to which it has led—abuses so inhuman and atrocious as to call forth the energies of the whole civilised world for their suppression. These said abuses may be summed up under three heads: (1) the oversea slave-trade, (2) slave-raiding, and (3) human sacrifices.

Of the oversea slave trade (now, happily, at any rate in West Africa, a thing of the past) it is unnecessary to say anything here ; the subject has a literature of its own, the perusal of which, half a century or so after the abolition of the disgraceful traffic in human beings, renders it difficult

* Hutchinson (1861), writing of the domestic slavery among the pagan tribes of the coast, says : " Domestic slavery differs from the feudalism and vassalage of English history, chiefly in reference to the brutalities and superstitions by which it is upheld."

to understand how the civilised nations of the world ever countenanced it. Yet for nearly four hundred years Europeans professed to see no harm in the trade, and it is only now, long years after it has ceased, that we are able to fully realise the evils that have resulted from it to Africa.

With regard to slave-raiding, we find before us one of the great African problems of the day—a matter of such importance that, unless means are found to suppress it, Europe can hope to derive but little benefit from the countries she has appropriated. Writing merely of West Africa, and of that of only British Nigeria, there is ample evidence of the state of affairs existing throughout the whole of Tropical Africa ; for slavery and slave-raiding are as rampant in the east as in the west of the great continent. This slave-raiding has gone on for countless ages ; it was in full force centuries before the establishment of the oversea slave-trade, though doubtless that traffic gave it a greater impetus ; slavery, as we have said, is indigenous to the country, and the necessity for possessing slaves has made slave-raiding always a most lucrative occupation. Thus, the white man is not entirely responsible for the present position of the African slave, but at the same time he has had a good deal to say to it. In early times, *i.e.* some five or six centuries ago, slave-raiding, as now practised, was possibly unknown ; slavery existed, it is true, but the slaves were mostly captives of fair war and their descendants, who, of course, remained slaves. The demand for slaves when the oversea trade commenced was greater than the slave-owning chiefs could supply, and so tempting were the inducements offered that they soon found means to fill the barracoons. Quarrels were picked with their neighbours, and fierce struggles took place between the various tribes, until eventually legitimate warfare became almost a thing of the past, and the coast tribes were nothing more than slave catchers and kidnappers.

To supply the European slave-dealer was now the sole idea of the West Coast chief, whose craving for European

commodities was insatiable; he wanted the spirituous liquors which the white man had to dispose of, and slave-catching was a quicker and more remunerative business than the production of palm-oil. In order to complete the work, weapons and gunpowder were required, and these were also supplied by the white man. As far as the coast was concerned, therefore, while the oversea slave-trade was in existence, the amount of cheap drink, arms, and ammunition poured into the country was enormous. Thus drunkenness and its attendant vices were largely increased by the accursed trade, and the civilisation of the people retarded by several decades, if not centuries. Even when trading in palm-oil took the place of trading in human beings, the demand for liquor and munitions of war continued. Slaves were now required in great numbers by the chiefs themselves in order to carry on the palm-oil trade, and slave-raiding consequently did not abate, but if anything increased. Little attention was paid to all this: Great Britain—virtually the only European Power represented—had quite enough to do to look after the small coast possessions which she occupied, and her power a few miles from the sea was *nil*. With trade matters the trader alone was concerned, and a considerable part of the trade was carried on where Great Britain had no jurisdiction whatever. These were the days of the Palm-Oil Ruffian, who cared little how he obtained his oil, so long as he was able to enrich himself. The black man asked for spirits and weapons, and they were accordingly bartered with him. What was it to the white man that depravity and vice were on the increase? or that his method of trade was producing internecine warfare among the coast tribes?

Coming down to modern times, twenty years ago (or in many parts much more recently) there was hardly a tribe who knew what a year of peace meant; slave-raiding went on within a mile of the small British possessions, and domestic slavery was not interfered with, but rather acknowledged, by the British authorities. Concerning this domestic slavery, a word of explanation is necessary, for one is apt to imagine that anything connected with

slavery is bad. Domestic slavery, pure and simple, is an institution as natural to the African as freedom is to the Briton; he is born a slave, and his parents have been slaves before him; he is often well treated by his master, receives his protection, works for him, and takes an interest in his affairs. He has many privileges, and by hard work can even save money, become wealthy, and be himself an owner of slaves. Such is the bright side of domestic slavery; there is also a dark side. The children born of the slaves of a household are not sufficiently numerous to supply the wants of their owner, and, in consequence, the deficiency has to be met by raiding and kidnapping. The captive, being of a tribe different from that of his owner, naturally resents his enforced servitude, and suffers illtreatment and hardships, culminating not infrequently in his death. Were the chiefs content to hold none but slave-born domestics—born, that is, in their own households—then it is doubtful if any great crusade would have been made against the *status* of slavery, at any rate for some years to come. But the perpetual raiding of peaceful tribes has thrown the whole country into such a state of unrest and consequent backwardness that, unless immediate action be taken, it bids fair to be utterly ruined.

So far we have been speaking only of the pagan tribes in the vicinity of the coast, amongst whom slave-raiding is not carried on to anything like the extent that it is among the Mohammedans farther inland. In the Mohammedan countries, *i.e.* the greater part of Northern Nigeria, slave-raiding is a profession, followed by every Mohammedan who can muster a band of armed men. Their objects are to capture as many pagans as they can, either retaining them as camp and domestic servants, or disposing of them by public sale. A very large number also are required for the payment of tribute by the smaller chiefs to their superiors, and in the Sokoto empire, where each year the Fulah raiders have to travel farther south to make their captures, the devastation of pagan villages is almost incredible. The Emir of Adamawa, it is said, until quite recently sent 10,000 slaves annually to the Sultan of



NATIVES AT LAU: MOHAMMEDANS
OF BENUÉ RIVER.

Photo : A. F. Mockler-Ferryman.

Sokoto ; the distance is roughly 800 miles, and the hardships endured on a journey of this length must have been so great that probably not one half of those who left Yola reached Wurno. This is only one of a score of instances, and, to testify to the number of pagans who are continually being captured, we have the evidence of Mr. C. H. Robinson,* who had every opportunity during his residence of three months in Kano of looking into the state of affairs. He tells us that parties of Mohammedans were constantly arriving with gangs of newly captured slaves, and that on one occasion he saw upwards of a thousand captives brought in by a single raiding party. We know also what went on in Nupé only five years ago, and it is the same in all these Mohammedan States ; slaves as matters stand are a necessity, and they must be obtained at all costs ; consequently there must be perpetual raiding. But the slave-tribute, enormous as it is, does not account for a tithe of the pagans captured, and the remainder go to the slave market, which exists in every town of any size. Here they find a ready sale, their purchasers employing them either as domestic servants, labourers, or carriers.† The more land a man possesses, the more slaves he requires to cultivate it, and the larger his household the greater number of harem attendants, concubines, and servants, though perhaps the majority of the slaves are employed as carriers, or what may be termed beasts of burden. To understand the situation aright, the reader must bear in mind three things, viz. that in these countries there is no free labour, no portable currency worth speaking of, and no means of transporting goods from place to place except on the heads of natives. For these reasons the travelling merchant is obliged to use slaves, and we will give an example. A merchant is going from Kano to the ivory markets in German Adamawa, and proposes taking with him a stock of tobies and cotton goods, and

* "Hausaland." 1896.

† A few slaves are transported across the Sahara to the Mediterranean ports, whence they pass to Turkey and other Mohammedan countries.

a supply of cowries for making small purchases on the road—all bulky articles. Accordingly, he goes to the slave market and purchases the number of slaves necessary to carry his merchandise and provisions for the journey. After travelling for a few days he finds that the consumption of the provisions has reduced the loads of his carriers, and he is able to dispense with the services of one or two of them, and for these he can always obtain a fair price. At Bautshi or Yola he stays for several days to enjoy himself, and pays his bill by dropping a slave. Thus in reality slaves are a currency—fluctuating, perhaps, but portable—far more so than their value in cowries, the only other universal currency of the country.

As with the oversea slave-trade so with the internal slave-trade; the whole matter resolves itself into a question of demand and supply. We have given an idea of what the demand is, and how the supply is kept up, but it should be noted that the supply—raid as the Mohammedans do—is never equal to the demand; what has now to be considered is how the demand can be abolished or, at any rate, lessened. With regard to the domestic slaves and labourers of the Mohammedans, nothing much can be done, at least for some considerable time, though when our position in the country becomes stronger the legal *status* of slavery will, of course, be abolished in the Mohammedan States as it has been in most of our coast possessions, and quite recently as far north as the Middle Niger.* Until this step is taken there must be a demand for slaves, but not necessarily a very enormous one, and, were it possible to do away with the carrier slave, then in all probability the annual amount of captures would be reduced by something like two-thirds. If we assume that 30 per cent. of the pagans captured die before being put in harness (a low estimate), and that 60 per cent. are eventually used for carrier work, then by abolishing the carrier we should reduce the number of captures by nearly 80 per cent. This would be a good beginning, and the suggested methods

* *Vide* page 84:

for accomplishing it are these : The improvement of communications throughout the country, and the establishment of a portable currency.

The first of these methods is now being attempted in several directions, but it must necessarily be many years before good roads and railways traverse the interior parts, though were Nigeria treated as seriously as Uganda, three or four years might see railways opening up the hinterland, and connecting the Mohammedan countries with the coast. It is more particularly among the Fulahs of the Sokoto Empire that the construction of roads and railways would lead to good results. With the Lagos-Ibadan line running to Ilorin, thence to Bida and Sokoto, and continued through Kano to Lake Chad, the Bornu and Hausa merchants who frequent this great trade route would no longer require carrier slaves, while with branch lines connecting with ports on the Benué River, all that vast tract of country situated between the Sahara and the Middle Niger and Benué would be thoroughly opened up. Again, a second main line, from Lake Chad to Old Calabar (*i.e.* along the eastern frontier) would remove many administrative and trade difficulties in both Northern and Southern Nigeria. The nature of the country presents no great obstacles to the construction of such lines, but the outlay would, of course, be heavy, and all that we can expect from a newly formed protectorate like Northern Nigeria is that a gradual advance will be made into the interior. In the meantime there is much that may be done at comparatively small cost ; roads a few feet in width can be made along the route which the railways will eventually take ; small military posts established here and there on these roads, with caravanserais a day's journey apart ; while trams and motor-cars on the roads and passenger steamers on the main rivers would in a very short space of time become immensely popular. We are only now advocating these measures as a peaceable way of reducing the amount of slave-raiding, but the reader can draw his own conclusions as to the advantages which would indirectly accrue to trade by their adoption. The

cost of the transport of merchandise would be small, in place of being a very heavy item, and the country and its inhabitants would become settled, whereby the resources of the former, and the industrious habits of the latter, would have a chance of being fully developed. Fortunately the Government has all this in mind, and the pushing forward of advanced posts, and the improvement of communications in the Fulah Empire, are even now being put into execution.

We now come to the question of currency, about which we have said something in relation to the trading operations of the Niger Company. It affects slave-raiding in this wise: There being practically no portable currency in the country, an immense number of slaves are required to carry heavy goods for barter, which would not be the case did money exist. For, in the instance given above of the Kano merchant travelling to the ivory market at Banyo, although he might have to purchase slaves to carry his ivory on the return journey, he would probably set out from Kano alone, with his money tied up in the corner of his tobe; and this he would certainly do were there good roads, protected by military posts. The extraordinary thing is that the country has gone on for such a length of time without a real currency, considering that the Hausa merchants are probably as business-like a class as is to be found anywhere out of Europe. But the natives themselves are well aware of the advantages of a currency, and would certainly welcome any reliable form of money. As a proof of this, it may be mentioned that a great number of the tribes employ some sort of currency other than slaves and cowries. Thus, in the Oil Rivers for several centuries bundles of brass or copper rods* (imported from England) have had their fixed value, by means of which other purchases can be made, and in two or three of the rivers horseshoe-like pieces of mixed metal, known as *manillas*, are still used in place of money. Similarly some of the pagan tribes of the Benué employ pieces of

* One hundred and twenty rods (value 25s. to 30s.) form a carrier's load.

iron resembling a small hoe, which are tied up in bundles, thirty-six being the price of a prime slave. In Borgu, also, iron hoes have their fixed value, the slave as usual being the standard. Barth tells us that the ancient standard of Bornu was the *rotl* (a pound of copper), while four *gabagas* (strips of cotton cloth) went to the *rotl*, and, on the introduction of cowries, eight of these to the *gabaga*.* Besides these and various like currencies, there is one of very considerable importance, since it shows that in Bornu and the Hausa States specie would be popular among the merchants. We refer to the dollar, which, more than half a century ago, had become a standard in Kano and other large trade centres, with a value of 2,500 cowries. These dollars are said to have been originally introduced into Bornu from the Mediterranean, and, though some few Spanish and Mexican are found, the principal are the Maria Theresa, numbers of which are still brought to the country from the north. As the people do not readily understand the principle of new dies, and are suspicious of a strange coin, the old pattern of dollar (with date 1780) is still struck in Austria for special export to Central Africa. The eagerness with which these coins are received is proof sufficient that the time is ripe in the Mohammedan States for the introduction of a money currency. The cumbersome methods of barter, and the use of slaves and cowries as mediums of exchange, are altogether behind the times, and most of our other West African possessions have long since introduced the use of English money.

Macgregor Laird, soon after he commenced operations in the Niger, became convinced that barter was too precarious a method of conducting business, and had some special coins struck for trade purposes. Very possibly he was premature in his ideas, but in any case the system was never given a trial, as the circulation of the coins was held to be illegal. After this, as far as the Niger was concerned, no attempt was made to introduce European money, though independent traders from time to time

* Known in some parts as *leppi*.

took to the Niger new English silver coins, which were much prized by the natives, who converted them into rings and other ornaments. Later on spurious imitations were imported, but their worthlessness soon became known, and the effect of their introduction was to make the people suspicious of all coins.

Now, however, the authorities are aware of the importance of substituting a money currency for the old methods, in both Southern and Northern Nigeria. With regard to the former, the Consul-General, in his Report (Niger Coast Protectorate) for 1897-98, said: "The officers of the Protectorate have made every effort to teach the natives the advantage of a coin currency, with a view to it eventually taking the place of the present systems. This coin currency being brought into use would not do away with the stock of manillas, brass rods, cowries, etc., in the Protectorate, but would simply mean that the importation of such manillas, etc., would cease, and eventually only cash would be used. The natives quite see the advantages of cash and the disadvantages of their present barter system, and when the time comes for the introduction of the former the natives generally will be very ready to accept it. One of the many advantages of cash which recommends itself to the chiefs, almost more than any other, is the fact that the majority of men they have now to use in carrying manillas and brass rods will, when cash is introduced, be available for working on their farms and plantations." Again, in the next Report (1898-99), he said: "It is noticed that to some extent, but in portions only of the territories, cash currency is making headway, more particularly in those portions where there is no existing currency; but it has also made slight headway in districts where brass rods, copper wire, and manilla currency are in use between the natives for transactions among themselves." As far as Northern Nigeria is concerned, a very good beginning was made by paying the Imperial troops in English coin, which gave a start to the circulation of coins of the realm (2s., 1s., 6d., and 3d.) in the markets adjacent to the military stations, though

the natives of the country have not as yet had sufficient time to get a thorough grasp of the token value of money, regarding, for instance, a florin as a poor equivalent for two shillings. But all this is merely a matter of education, and when once the principles of a legal tender become thoroughly understood, and the natives become convinced that the value of the coins is fixed and guaranteed by the British Government, the advantages of the system over slaves and cowries will be at once realised. As long as any part of the land remains without a portable money currency, slaves will be employed by the native trader in the dual capacity of beast of burden and cheque-book; and, consequently, slave-raiding to supply these necessities will continue. With a money currency well established, the demand for carriers would diminish, if not disappear, and tribute would be paid in the coin of the realm instead of in slaves.

Though, as we have shown, slave-raiding in Northern Nigeria is undoubtedly having the most baneful effect on the country, it is only fair to the ruling Fulahs to say that we Englishmen are inclined to regard all Mohammedan military expeditions as having for their object the enslaving of pagans, whereas it is certain that in some instances the expeditions are for the punishment of wild pagan tribes who have looted peaceful Mohammedan caravans. In this lies one of the great difficulties which the British officials in Northern Nigeria have to face; for if the Mohammedan emirs, nominally under British protection, are not protected from the incursions of the pagans, and are at the same time denied the means of defending themselves, they will naturally regard British protection as a snare and a delusion.

Without dwelling on the motives, religious or otherwise, of human sacrifices, it is necessary to refer to these enormities, as they affect the demand for slaves among the pagan tribes of Southern Nigeria. The slaves offered as sacrifices are invariably selected from those captured in war, not from the domestic slaves born in the household; and as, on great occasions, a wholesale slaughter of slaves takes place, the numbers required for this custom alone are very

large. There is, of course, only one method of checking this demand, viz. the suppression of human sacrifices, and, owing to the energetic action of British officials, they are happily becoming each year less common. With such human sacrifice centres as Brass and Benin broken down, a great blow has been dealt to the practice; but, at the same time, it is a mistake to suppose that the people see the error of their ways; for, were all Europeans to withdraw from the Coast, it is more than probable that human sacrifices would be immediately indulged in by tribes who are now held to be civilised Africans. But Europeans have no intention of withdrawing; moreover, they are, year by year, establishing themselves more firmly in the country, and the total abolition of human sacrifices is merely a matter of time.

To sum up the matter of slavery and slave-raiding as now existing in British Nigeria. We have seen that slave-raiding is followed as a profession by a vast number of Mohammiedan chiefs, and that kidnapping and intertribal warfare for the purpose of capturing slaves is pursued by the pagans of all parts which are not under the immediate supervision of British officials. The slaves thus captured are required for various purposes, as domestic servants, trading boys, harem attendants, concubines, and carriers, for prædial labour, and as soldiers to swell the ranks of the raiding chiefs; while, among the pagans, they have the further use of furnishing the material for human sacrifices. For the extirpation of slave-raiding it is proposed, besides the employment of force, to endeavour to diminish the demand for slaves of the carrier class by the construction of roads, tramways, and eventually railways, and by the rapid development of a monetary currency—both feasible plans; to diminish the demand for slaves of other kinds by the gradual substitution of paid labour for slavery; and, furthermore, to stamp out human sacrifices.

It remains only to discuss the question of the abolition of the legal *status* of slavery, about the rights and wrongs of which opinions differ very considerably. There are many good points connected with domestic slavery, and

could the chiefs be prevented from increasing their stock of slaves except by the births in their households, then it would, perhaps, be wise to let well alone. But this is impossible, for while domestic slavery in any form exists no amount of legislation is able to prevent the chiefs from smuggling slaves into their households from outside, and slave-raiding must go on. At the same time, it is doubtful if all parts of British Nigeria are ready for the abolition of this domestic slavery; in our older African colonies no form of slavery is recognised, and domestic slavery is dying a natural death. To issue, in our newly acquired territories, a sweeping proclamation making the holding of slaves illegal, and requiring existing slave-holders to at once give up their slaves, would lead to hardships almost impossible to realise. Slavery is so ingrained in the people that to be suddenly thrown on their own resources would result in half the slaves dying of starvation. Whatever steps are taken must be gradual, and in such Mohammedan countries as the Hausa States (Northern Nigeria), if an abolition proclamation is to mean anything, there must be sufficient force at hand to back it up. All that can be hoped, for the present, in our newer possessions, is what was done in 1897 in a portion of the Royal Niger Company's territories, viz. the abolition of the legal *status* of slavery. By this is implied, not that it is illegal to hold slaves, but that the owner of slaves will no longer be supported by the British Government with regard to his property in his slaves; he cannot demand their restoration should they run away; while the slave himself is free to leave his owner and claim his freedom whenever he desires to do so, and the liability of the owner for the wrongdoings of the slave is no greater than that of master for servant in English law. By thus applying the thin end of the wedge, it can gradually be driven home, until the time arrives for splitting asunder a system so repugnant to civilised sentiment. To do more than this, or even as much, during the next few years in Nigeria would probably be to court complete failure, for it is an open question whether the abolition of the legal *status* of slavery is really beneficial to the slaves themselves.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RELIGION OF THE PAGANS.

Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Paganism — The Religious Beliefs of the Pagans—Tribal and Family Deities—Making a God—Charms—Local Gods—Idols—Fetish—Sacrifices—Human Victims—The Soul and the Indwelling Spirits—The Other World—Ghosts of Inanimate Objects—Cannibalism—Secret Societies—Egbo—Juju—"Long Juju"—Totemism.

THE religions, or beliefs, of the people of this particular quarter of Africa may be divided for convenience into Christianity, Mohammedanism, and paganism, the two former having been introduced from outside in more modern times. In describing paganism as a religion, we use the term religion in its wide sense, *i.e.* a system of faith and worship, and before dwelling on the advent of the Crescent and the Cross into this part of West Africa, we will glance at some of the pagan beliefs of the aborigines, for, savage though the various tribes may be, there is none devoid of a belief in some deity, and most have an idea of the soul and of a future state. These ideas may be confused, and to the Christian or Mohammedan absurd, but after all they are no more peculiar than were the pre-Christian beliefs of our own ancestors. The pagan is neither atheist nor agnostic; and his religion, with its superstitious rites, so-called fetish and juju, binds him probably more tightly than do the doctrines of Christianity or Islam their followers.

Although the tribes are widely scattered, and hold religious views differing in many particulars from each other, there has been found to be a certain similarity in the conceptions of all the West Coast pagans. In the main their beliefs are identical with what in Europe we now term "superstition"; two centuries ago very similar ideas were held by such northern Christians as the

Scandinavians, and a student of folk-lore will find in the wilds of Ireland, even to-day, traces of not a few of the superstitious customs of the African pagans.* This is the case with the general belief in invisible beings, or "spirits," capable of working good or evil against mankind; whether the origin of this animism, so prevalent among all primitive and uncivilised people in every part of the world, is to be found, as Lubbock and Herbert Spencer suggest, in the dreams of the sleeper, or whether the African may be considered as a species of "medium" dwelling in "Borderland," are questions beyond the scope of this work. Certain it is, however, that every action of the pagan African is influenced by his unbounded faith, for weal or for woe, in the spirit world. There are spirits who rule the sea, the rivers and the streams, the mountains, the valleys, the forests, the wind, lightning and thunder, and all the elements. To the savage mind these spirits are mostly inimical to mankind, and, unless humoured, are ever ready to work destruction; consequently the spirit is raised to the rank of a deity, and propitiated with such votive offerings as are thought to be particularly appreciated by this exalted being. There is nothing new in all this; it is merely the earliest stage of uncivilised religion, or, to put it plainly, the pagan African is in his religious views (if not in most other respects) some ten or fifteen centuries behind the times. This fact is what Europeans are so prone to forget; "horrible atrocities" are frequently chronicled from West Africa, and are regarded (perhaps naturally) by us as the most vicious acts of a depraved people, whereas, in reality, to the perpetrators they form an essential part of their religion—the human sacrifice means no more to the pagan than does the harvest festival to ourselves—and the pagan's faith, be it remembered, is implanted far deeper in his daily life than is the religion of any civilised people.

To enumerate all the gods of the pagans of Nigeria would be an impossibility; a few deities are common to

* *Vide* Chapter XIV.

several tribes, or even to two or more nations; other deities are worshipped by a single tribe or family; while, lastly, each individual of any importance has a god of his own. The pagan, therefore, has to be perpetually thinking of a number of deities, all of whom require to be propitiated with offerings and sacrifices, to lighten which task priests become a necessity. The duty of these priests was originally to take care of the offerings and guard the locality where the god resided; but as time went on they formed themselves into a distinct class, and gradually assumed the rôle of intercessor between the man and his god, until eventually they came to be considered almost as powerful as the god himself, whose mouthpiece they professed to be. By cunning and trickery the priesthood became paramount, and to this day in such parts as the Oil Rivers the jujuman rules the people with a rod of iron. Between the chief deities and his worshippers there is no direct intercourse, the priest alone being able to hold communication with the god; but with the man's private god matters are different—it is his own particular affair, and brooks no outside interference; for by the man himself was the god created. Ellis relates fully how a native procures for himself a god. He betakes himself to a gloomy recess of the forest where one of the local higher deities is known to reside, and propitiates the deity by pouring rum on the ground. After this he proceeds to make his god, which may consist of one of four materials, viz. a bough cut from the spot, and shaped roughly into the figure of a man; a piece of stone; the root of a plant, scraped, and ground into a paste with the blood of a fowl; or some red earth mixed with blood or rum. The last two materials are kept in the man's house in a brass pan adorned with parrot's feathers, and are always covered with shea-butter. As soon as the material for a god has been prepared, a further ceremony is gone through in order to induce the higher deity to pass a spirit into it; and when all has been satisfactorily accomplished the god is taken home, given a name, and carefully looked after. A small portion of the daily food is placed upon it, and it

becomes part and parcel of the man's life. It protects him from injury, makes him prosperous, and, through it, its worshipper can procure the death of any of his enemies. Its actions, whether good or evil, are worked by means of charms made for it and dedicated to it—a bundle of twigs, a bunch of feathers, and a variety of articles, into which the virtue of the god passes by a process of incantation.

The higher deities consist for the most part of one or two superior ones worshipped by a whole nation. These are usually held to be visible only to the priests, and their spirits dwell in a grove or on a hill in some sequestered spot, while a house with all conveniences is set apart for the god in the towns and large villages. He (or it may be she) is represented by an image in grotesque and hideous human form, before which offerings are made of every conceivable thing, from the human victim to a glass of gin. Days are set apart for its worship, and the wildest orgies are indulged in by the people, human sacrifices, followed by smearing the blood on the images, forming a special feature of the festivals at places outside British jurisdiction. These more important deities control all minor deities; thus the numerous local gods are created by them, while the local gods in their turn spiritualise the tutelary deity of the individual. The local deities are many and various; any accident that occurs is attributed to the malevolence of some spirit, and if the spot had previously no deity, one is immediately instituted. Thus in all parts are seen trees, rocks, and such-like things which are held by the people to be sacred, and where offerings are periodically made. There is no river without its god, who, in the shape of a crocodile or other probable annihilator of mankind, must be propitiated before embarking on its waters. A large tree by the wayside might fall and crush a passer-by; it is therefore considered to be the abode of a god, and revered accordingly. In this manner every striking object in Nature is worshipped, not because it is one of Nature's wonders, but because it is thought that it contains the spirit of an evil-working deity. Beneficent spirits are almost unknown to the

pessimistic African, to whom existence must seem a veritable struggle, for though he has the consolation of praying to his private god, he is all the while aware that the spirit in the befeathered brass pot is, as it were, a vassal of the great god that lives beneath the shade of the *bombax* tree.

There is one thing about this West African paganism that is certainly peculiar. In most primitive religions, almost the earliest form of worship, after that of trees and stones, was that of the heavenly bodies, the principal of which were regarded as man-like gods. The ancient Greeks, Romans, Hindus, Persians, New Zealanders, Norsemen, and others, all bowed down before the sun, the moon, and the stars. But as a rule the West African apparently pays no attention to these things;* they do not appeal to him, because he takes them as objects too far away to affect him, though not uncommonly his principal deity is the general controller of the firmament—a Jupiter or sky-god in fact.† Lightning, he knows, harms him; rain assists in the production of his crops; wind and tornadoes work destruction; such things, therefore, are controlled by a god, whom it is necessary to worship. The stars, the moon, and the sun remain in the heavens, and do not concern themselves in the affairs of this world, for which reason the African regards them merely as harmless ornaments hung in the skies. With regard to the gods of the elements, the wind-god of the Yorubas, says Burton, “is shut in a cave, under a guardian called Wuo-hun-to, who, after oiling his own body, which would otherwise be cut up by the wind, opens the gate and lets his charge issue to torment the world.” Shango, the god of thunder and lightning, is thus described by Ellis: “He dwells in the clouds in an immense brazen palace, where he maintains a large retinue and keeps a great number of horses; for, besides being the thunder-god, he is also the god of the chase and of pillage. From his palace Shango hurls

* There are some slight traces among the Yorubas of the worship of the sun and the moon:

† Olorun, the principal god of the Yorubas, is considered to be, as the name implies, owner of the sky:

upon those who have offended him red-hot chains of iron, which are forged for him by his brother Ogun, god of iron and of war." The god of the sea is Olokun, "of human shape and black in colour, but with long flowing hair, and he resides in a vast palace under the sea, where he is served by a number of sea-spirits, some of whom are human in shape, while others partake more or less of the nature of fish." These gods and many more of the same kind are all chief deities worshipped by the majority of the people, but in addition every river has its own god, to which sacrifices are made by the natives dwelling near at hand; and it should be observed that the conception of these deities is that they are of human form, though invisible to man, except perhaps at times to the priests.

The numerous images or idols found to be presumably worshipped in West Africa has led to the notion that the pagan imagines that the carved wood or stone, the moulded clay, or the material in the brass pot is actually a god. This is erroneous; no West African native believes that any of these articles are in themselves gods, though he does believe that the spirit of a god has entered into them, and it is to this spirit that he makes his offering. This error has crept in by means of the improper use of the word *fetish**—of Portuguese origin, and altogether unknown to the negro. It is applied nowadays by the European to everything connected with the religion of the pagans, though in reality it means "a tangible and inanimate object worshipped for itself alone"—a thing never found in West Africa, which has, therefore, been wrongly called the "Land of Fetish." The mistake arose, doubtless, from the misconception of early travellers, who, seeing the people offering sacrifices before a tree or an image, very naturally concluded that the tree or the image was the deity worshipped, but fuller inquiry has elicited the true state of the case; an object is held sacred only because the spirit of a god has passed into it, and if, under any circumstances, the spirit should abandon its dwelling

* A corruption of *feitiço*, an amulet or charm.

place, the object would be discarded as valueless. We have mentioned how spiritual virtue is passed into various charms, which then possess powers of working good or evil, and it is to these things in particular that the term "fetish" is so frequently applied by Europeans. Charms or amulets (unlike images, for example) are not supposed to contain the spirit of a deity, but obtain their virtue by being consecrated by the priests, and are usually worn round the neck or arm, the wearer believing that by these distinguishing marks he will be known to his god and protected from misfortune. Various other kinds of charms are also in use, and, where the pagans come in contact with Mohammedans, verses of the Koran written by the latter and sewn up in cloth or leather are considered to be particularly effective; but in this matter the heathen is not peculiar, for the Mohammedans themselves have a firm belief in the value of such things.

For his god or gods the pagan deems it necessary to show his reverence by offering some form of sacrifice—something which in thus offering is an actual sacrifice or denial to himself; a portion of his daily food is set apart for his god, or, before drinking his palm wine, he pours out a little of it as a libation. Again, the merchant returning from a successful journey will offer a part of his gains to the deity who has been instrumental in bringing him good fortune; while on great occasions sacrifices of living animals are made, the shedding of blood being considered an act in particular favour with the more important gods. The highest form of blood offering is, of course, the sacrifice of human beings, and it is easy to understand why this should be so; for, as the goat has a higher monetary value than the fowl, so the slave (treated as a mere chattel) is worth considerably more than any other animal. But this is not the only reason why human sacrifices take the first rank, and probably the real origin of this form of human sacrifice is to be found in the ancient belief of all peoples that in warfare the invisible gods of one side contended with the invisible gods of the other side, and that the victorious deities required as a thank-offering,

for having aided their worshippers, the sacrifice of a certain number of the captives taken from the enemy. From this it became usual to keep the prisoners of war not required for immediate sacrifice as slaves until the gods demanded further propitiation and further shedding of blood. It is the slave's lot, therefore, to be sacrificed, and if misfortune or disease attack the people, their chief deity has to be appeased by a slaughter of slaves.

Passing from human sacrifice in its true sense to the slaughter of human beings for other purposes, we come to the more popular acceptation of the term, viz. the killing of slaves on the death of their master, to accompany him to the other world. Before, however, discussing this second form of human sacrifice, it will be necessary to say something as to the belief of the West African pagan in the soul and the future state. Soul is perhaps hardly the right word, for the man's *kra* (as it is called in some parts) is somewhat different from our conception of the soul. Still, most pagans who have risen above a condition of absolute savagery maintain that man (like the image of his god) is the dwelling-place of the guardian spirit, who entered the body of the man at his birth, and who leaves it at his death. This *kra*, at death, says Ellis, becomes a *sisá*, but can revert to the position of *kra* by being re-born in a new body. Before this latter event takes place, however, the *sisá* remains near the grave of the deceased, and it is for it that part of the food is provided by the mourners, otherwise the *sisá* becomes a malignant spirit, and brings misfortune on the dead man's house. After a period of a few months the *sisá* (should it not in the meanwhile have become a *kra*) must depart to *sisá*-land, whence it has the power of issuing and entering the body of a man when his *kra* is temporarily absent—an event which takes place when the man is sick or asleep. But the *sisá* is now an evil spirit, and the man is, as it were, "possessed of a devil," requiring the special exorcisms of the priests for its expulsion. The *kra* itself, therefore, is an earthly spirit, and has no connection with the Land of the Dead, which is peopled by shadowy human forms or ghosts of

men—exact representations of what they had been in life.

Such is the belief of a great many West African tribes, and the others differ in their views only slightly. The *kra* exists in all cases, though sometimes the man is considered to be the abode of more than one spirit. Among some of the tribes there are two indwelling spirits, a good and a bad (female and male), who prompt the man to good or bad actions, thus forming what we would call his conscience. Then, again, the Yorubas have three such spirits, viz. *Olori*, in the head; *Ipin ijeun*, in the stomach; and *Ipori*, in the great toe—each distinct, but nevertheless working more or less in unison. Similarly, the pagan maintains that beasts and plants possess a second individuality or indwelling spirit, and that all such animate objects take their place equally with human beings in the Land of the Dead. Furthermore, the *kra* of a man may, after passing through the stage of *sisá* or *noli*,* be re-born in an animal or plant, and if re-born in an animal, show its disposition towards mankind by inhabiting a ferocious or a harmless beast. Neither is this all, for inanimate objects are capable, when buried with a corpse, of transmitting the ghosts of themselves to the world of shadows.

By a knowledge of these views regarding the pagan hereafter, it is easy to understand the reason for a wholesale slaughter of wives and slaves at the burial of a great man. His ghost will be like himself in every particular, and his new state will be a repetition of his life on earth, but in order that this may be so, it is necessary to send after him slaves and attendants sufficiently numerous to maintain his dignity. The ghost of the slave or of the wife accompanies the ghost of the master, who on his long journey refreshes himself by partaking of the ghost of the food that his relatives place by the side of his corpse; while the ghosts of his pipe, tobacco, weapons, etc., buried with him, continue to have their uses. The

* The Ewes (Dahomey) call toadstools "*noli*-shelters," which may be compared to old European ideas about fairy rings, etc.

proper performance of funeral rites is of the greatest importance, as, if disregarded, the ghost of the man continues to haunt the world, and annoy mankind—an idea which was not uncommon a few years ago even among civilised peoples.

Intimately associated with human sacrifice is cannibalism, which still prevails to a certain extent in Southern Nigeria, though there is no proof that any of the known cannibal tribes of these parts ever eat human flesh from other than religious motives. Their cannibalism is not of the lower order, that is to say the flesh is not eaten because it is enjoyed or to stay the pangs of hunger, but rather because the people are under the impression that the gods who have fought on their side demand that a proportion of the captives of war shall be eaten, in order that their fighting qualities may pass into the system of the conquerors. Such ideas are common to all primitive people, and if we are to believe Strabo, the ancient Britons, for similar reasons, were in the habit of devouring their dead relatives.* This, then, is the primary cause of West African cannibalism, and very possibly the origin of it among all anthropophagous people. But, besides eating the flesh of the slaughtered captives of war, no great human sacrifice offered for the purpose of appeasing the gods and averting sickness or misfortune is considered to be complete unless either the priests or the people eat the bodies of the victims. This is encouraged by the priests, who work up the people into a state of demoniacal frenzy, whereby to increase their faith in matters pertaining to religion. At Benin, prior to our recent occupation, these revolting orgies were of very frequent occurrence, but, though they still go on within a few miles of some of our advanced posts on the Oil Rivers, it has seldom fallen to the lot of a European to be present at an actual cannibal feast. Consul Hutchinson, in 1859, witnessed one of these orgies

* M. le Comte de Cardi says that a custom similar to this is still carried on in the Upper Cross River.—“West African Studies,” page 566.

on a small scale, being concealed in a hut in front of the juju-house at Bonny. The occasion was the sacrifice of one man only, but it is not difficult to imagine, from the Consul's account of what he saw, what would take place at the slaughter of a hundred victims as a single sacrifice to an important deity. After describing how the unfortunate man was beheaded, and the head conveyed away to be cooked for the head juju-man, Hutchinson continues: "A yell, such as reminded me of a company of tigers, arose from the multitude; cutlasses were flourished as they crowded round the body of the dead man; sounds of cutting and chopping rose amidst the clamour of the voices, and I began to question myself whether, if I were on the other side of the River Styx, I should see what I was looking at here through the little slit in the wall of my hiding-place. A crowd of human vultures gloating over the headless corpse of a murdered brother negro; boys and girls walking away from the crowd, holding pieces of bleeding flesh in their hands, while the dripping life-fluid marked their road as they went along; and one woman snapping from the hands of another—both of them raising their voices in clamour—a part of the body of that poor man in whom the breath of life was vigorous not a quarter of an hour ago."

The eating of human flesh is also indulged in at special times by the priests of cannibal tribes, and in some parts it is a qualification for becoming a witch or for membership of such secret societies as those known as "human leopards" and "human crocodiles," but in every case it forms part of the religion of the natives. With regard to secret societies, we mentioned when treating of the customs of the people that most of the pagan tribes have some kind of freemasonry or secret organisation, and though a few of them appear to be unconnected with religion, the majority are certainly altogether of a religious character. Little has so far been discovered concerning the rites, ceremonies, or laws of any of these societies, and so well is the secrecy maintained, that, though they are gradually being abolished as harmful, it is doubtful if their true nature will ever be

brought to light. The society with which Europeans have come most in contact is the Egbo of the Oil Rivers. This has numerous branches, subdivided into various grades, and its power is supreme. By means of the Egbo all enemies are detected, or pretended to be so, and the priests or juju-men are, as a rule, the heads of the various branches, with free licence to perpetrate every species of enormity. Disguised in hideous wooden masks and strange dresses, they issue forth to prey on the minds of the miserable people, to whom the sound of the Egbo horn or bell is the signal for a general stampede, for anyone found abroad by the Egbo is severely beaten, if not torn to pieces. The juju-man is at once priest, oracle, detective, judge, and executioner, and he has the power of placing a religious prohibition on anything he pleases, which is then said to be "juju." In the detection of crime he has recourse to witchcraft, sorcery, and ordeal of fire, feather, or of poisoned water, and to fall foul of the juju-man means almost certain destruction.

The word *juju*, found only in the neighbourhood of the Oil Rivers, is used indiscriminately by Europeans for all matters which may be considered to form part of the pagan's religion, and as a synonym for *fetish*; thus, the priest is a juju-man, his temple a juju-house, to take an oath is to "swear juju," and so on. Like *fetish*, it is of European origin, being, as Miss Kingsley tells us, nothing more than a corruption of the French *joujou*, though it is extensively used by the English-speaking natives of these regions. In the interior, north of New Calabar and Opobo, lies the Aro country,* famous until the recent expedition as possessing the Supreme Juju Court, known as "Long Juju." This by some was said to be at the town of Bendi,† but the head priests alone were aware of the exact locality, and the secret was guarded most jealously. The accounts given of the place varied very considerably, though it

* An interesting account of this country, by Captain Venour, D.S.O., is given in the *Geographical Journal*, Vol. XX., p. 88.

† *Vide* page 115:

appeared certain that it was the court of final ordeal, to which all cases that the local juju-men, for one reason or another, did not wish to decide, were referred. The threat of "Long Juju" was held over his trading-boys by the chief, and it being the general opinion that there was no return for the person sent, the hold thus established was tolerably complete. Still, cases occurred of slaves whose misdeeds had been repeatedly punished, and whom their master wished to get rid of; the master assembled a court of the chiefs, and the offender was sentenced to be deported to "Long Juju." He then proceeded on his journey, under the care of a juju-man, who, the natives affirmed, conducted him, blindfolded and by a circuitous route, to the fatal spot.

What eventually took place has never been divulged, and the popular accounts were probably spread by the chiefs to overawe their slaves. The supreme judge was said to be a priestess possessed of the power of knowing all things; when brought before her, the offender was merely told that he could depart; if guilty he became transfixed to the spot, and water gradually rose around him until he was submerged. Another version was that the place was situated on an island, and that the victim, on being handed over by his conductor, went through some form of mock trial, always resulting in conviction, whereupon he was cast alive into a huge tank of boiling human blood. Juju-men stood round armed with two-edged swords, with which they hacked the body to pieces and stirred up the contents of the tank.

Of late years the chiefs of the Oil Rivers have shown every inclination to refer their cases to the Consular Courts, so that "Long Juju," with its terrors, has been passing into disuse. That, however, it continued to have considerable hold on the wretched pagans of the more remote parts of the Niger Delta is vouched for by an interesting occurrence which took place in 1899. A party of 136 strange natives came in one day to the British official at the advanced post at Eket (Cross River), and appealed to him for protection. According to their story they were inhabitants

of villages about Asseh Creek and Abo (Lower Niger), and were the remnant of a party of some 800 who had been despatched from their homes, three or four years previously, to consult "Long Juju." They had been accused of witchcraft and various other crimes, and had paid heavy fees on the promise of probable absolution. On nearing the "Long Juju" country, they had been conducted by winding paths about the bush for three months, and were then accommodated in a village. From this spot ten or twenty of them were taken each day to consult "Long Juju," and as no one ever returned to the village, those that remained eventually became suspicious, and finally took to flight. The refugees were sent back under escort to their own country, and doubtless soon disabused the minds of their fellow-tribesmen of the efficacy of "Long Juju," though the fraud went on until the British expedition commenced operations at the close of 1901, and eventually discovered the mysterious spot.

Anything more extraordinary than the Aro-Chuku juju den it is hard to imagine. In the midst of dense bush lay a deep hollow, about two hundred yards in circumference, and surrounded by precipitous cliffs, some seventy feet high. The approach was by a narrow gorge at one end, and, just before the hollow itself was reached, the members of the expedition found on the left the sacrificial slab, shaded by a palm tree to which was suspended a live goat; while on the right was a pile of skulls and jujus. Within the hollow was a pool of water (a foot or so in depth) full of crocodiles and catfish; a wall of slabs encircling the pool, and an island standing in its centre. Two altars were erected on the island; one of trade-guns and skulls, the other of wood, adorned with bones, feathers, blood, and votive offerings of various kinds; and at the far end of the hollow, with a stream trickling from beneath it, stood the great altar, composed of native matting, backed by cloths, and finally topped by a huge pile of human skulls.

The actual ceremony on the arrival of victims at the "Long Juju" is still unknown, and some time must

elapse before the natives will have sufficient confidence to reveal the secret, though it seems probable that the priests were accustomed to allow about half the "pilgrims" to go free—of course after extracting heavy toll. That the secret has been so well kept is probably due to the facts that, in the first place, the "pilgrims" who were to escape death were usually blindfolded throughout the ceremony; and, secondly, that it was impressed on them that it was impossible for any man to enter the sacrificial grotto and return to the world alive. It is difficult for matter-of-fact Europeans to realise this, but the terror inspired by the juju-men reduces an African's mind to a state of absolute chaos. That he had been to "Long Juju" and returned alive he would never acknowledge; neither would any of his friends believe him if he related his experiences. He himself would firmly believe that when he entered the mysterious grove he ceased to live, and that he returned to the world either as a "spirit," or as some entirely different person. His own mother might meet him, but she would refuse to believe that what she saw was anything but the "spirit" of her son.

Before concluding this sketch of the religion of the pagans we must say something about the very marked traces of totemism which are found in West Africa. In nearly every tribe there are individuals who belong to a clan named after an animal or plant; this is not universal—that is to say, it is not the rule that each member of a tribe possesses such a distinctive appellation, but in one tribe there may be found two or three men with a surname of Leopard, Dog, Crocodile, or the like, and the Leopards, etc., of one tribe would claim with those of another tribe common descent from an original Leopard. The Leopard becomes the badge or crest of the clan, and the animal itself is sacred to every member of the clan,* its flesh being forbidden to be eaten. The more common names of these clans are the Leopard, Buffalo, Dog, Crocodile, Bush-cat, Monkey, Lion, Snake, Iguana, Parrot, Plantain, Corn-

* *Vide* "Up the Niger," page 309.

etalk, and Palm-tree. In some few instances the people claim direct descent from the actual animal or plant whose name they bear, but this true totemism is the exception among the West Africans, for the names are usually accounted for by the supposition that some ancestor received the nickname of a certain animal or plant, and that his descendants retained the same. It is only natural that in the course of time uncivilised people who bear the name of a particular animal and its effigy as their badge should come to regard the actual animal as their special care, and it is more than probable that where such things as snakes and iguanas are held sacred, or where certain plants are forbidden to be eaten, there are to be found powerful parties belonging to the Snake or Iguana clan, or bearing the name of the forbidden plants.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS.

Mohammedanism in Nigeria—Conversion of the Pagans—Advantages and Disadvantages—Slavery and Polygamy—Christian Missions—The Fourah Bay College—Bishop Samuel Crowther—His Work—Mission Schools—Value of a Knowledge of Medicine—Bishop Tugwell and the Sudan Mission—Difficulties—Prospects.

FROM a perusal of the geographical description contained in previous chapters, the reader will have already grasped the fact that British Nigeria, from a religious point, has a tolerably clear boundary-line marking the limits of Mohammedanism. The line, perhaps, is not drawn as regularly as that defining the sphere of influence of a Power, but nevertheless, if we look at the map, we can lay down with fair accuracy the sphere of influence of Islam and of heathendom. We know, from the accounts of the Fulah proselytising wave, how vast regions of West Africa originally peopled by pagans have become a hot-bed of Mohammedanism; what we now propose to discuss is the result—whether it has been beneficial or otherwise to the natives. When treating of such matters it is difficult for the Christian to forget for the time the peculiar circumstances of the case, and as the religious question has usually been dealt with by more or less biassed members of the Church of England, even those who have striven to be impartial have, perhaps unwittingly, been inclined to minimise the good work done among the pagans by Mohammedans.

The doctrines and tenets of Islam are too well known to require any mention. As first preached by the Prophet, it was undoubtedly a pure, charitable, and good religion; but later in life, when the man of peace took up arms for the Faith, and commanded the wholesale slaughter of unbelievers, charity disappeared, though it must be admitted that in the Old Testament are to be found ample

proofs of the recognition of the justice of warfare in the name of religion. Without, however, entering into a theological discussion, we would point out that between Mohammedanism as originally taught by its founder and that of to-day there is a wide difference; purity and charity are now conspicuous by their absence, and in their places have arisen bigotry and fanaticism. Still, there is much that is good in the teachings of the Mohammedans, and as far as Africa is concerned, Islam is certainly better for the welfare of the natives than the wretched state of paganism which we described in the last chapter. "When," says Mr. Clodd,* "we hear good-meaning people lament that negroes should become Mohammedans, let us remember that this was not the feeling of Jesus when His disciples told Him that they had forbidden a man who was casting out demons in His name. 'And Jesus said, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.' And this, I am sure, He would say to-day of the Mohammedan missionaries if He were amongst us."

We do not at all pretend to maintain that Mohammedan influence is *wholly* beneficial to the pagan Africans, for we have had frequent occasion to abuse their slave-raiding propensities, but it is impossible to deny that in the scale of civilisation the Mohammedan is far above the pagan. The Rev. C. H. Robinson, who is no supporter of African Mohammedanism, says: "In the comparatively few cases in which it has succeeded in gaining an influence over cannibals and degraded savages, it has undoubtedly raised them to a much higher level of civilisation, and it has done this more rapidly perhaps than Christianity would have done it."† Again, we have the evidence of the French explorer Monteil, who, in setting forth the advantages of Islam over heathendom, claims for the Mohammedans that their habits are productive of health, that they are not habitual drunkards, that they have no

* "The Childhood of Religions," by Edward Clodd, New Edition, 1891.

† "Mohammedanism: Has It Any Future?"

human sacrifices and other barbarous customs, that they have notions of equality before God, and temper justice with mercy. On the other hand, evidence is not wanting to disprove some of Monteil's assertions. Another French traveller, Binger, although an upholder of Islam in West Africa, says of the Fulahs, "All are Mohammedans without exception, and are all drunken in the fullest acceptance of the word. Towards five o'clock in the evening it is no longer possible to have a serious conversation with them—young people, adults, and old men are all drunk."* Lugard also is a witness against the Mohammedans: "Over vast areas of West Africa," he writes, "Mohammedanism has become so deteriorated by intemperance that its influence for good has been largely discounted. The Mohammedan negro is inflated with a sense of his superiority, which has taught him a supreme contempt for human life outside the pale of his own creed."

But even acknowledging that the Mohammedans of West Africa are intemperate, that they are inveterate slave-raiders and oppressors of the pagans, and that they are somewhat lax in their morals, the fact remains that the countries over which they rule are more prosperous than the lands of the independent pagans, and the people far pleasanter to deal with. The Mohammedan of the Western Sudan is not such a rabid fanatic as his co-religionists of certain other parts of the world, and he is by no means averse to intercourse with Europeans. The Hausa Constabulary, with which England holds her Nigerian possessions, is composed almost entirely of Mohammedans—not, of course, Fulahs, but Mohammedan negroes—and probably no more loyal body of men exists in the British Empire. But the Mohammedans of whom M. Binger and Sir F. Lugard write are the Fulahs, whose century of conquest has produced in their natures a wild and careless mode of life bordering on profligacy and immorality; with the higher classes matters are different,

* This, we need hardly say, is a great exaggeration of the state of affairs.



MOHAMMEDAN TRADERS.

Photo : Mr. G. F. Packer.

and the sultans, emirs, imams, and mallams are by no means deficient in enlightenment, or even culture. They have their vices, but for that matter so have European Christians, and if a strict inquiry could be made into the inner life of any of the large towns of the Western Sudan, in all probability the moral standard of the Fulahs would be found to be far higher than that of any of our own manufacturing towns.

Although the Mohammedans force their religion on those whom they conquer, yet they have other methods, and the Faith is widely preached by earnest missionaries,* the converts thus made seldom afterwards forsaking Islam. There are many points in the Mohammedan doctrines which appeal to the pagan African far more readily than does Christianity. Slavery and polygamy, both natural to all Africans, is permitted by the Mohammedans, but forbidden by the Christians; again, the preacher is like themselves, a black man and an inhabitant of their own country. All that the pagan has to give up on embracing Islam is the worship of his old gods and the heathen customs connected with them. In most cases he is only too willing to shake off the terrorism of the priesthood, knowing, as he does, that in his new faith he will be supported by Mohammedan arms. If there were no good in the creed of the Faithful, is it likely that it would have withstood the test of twelve centuries, and have spread far more rapidly than Christianity? We are not decrying Christianity, nor in any way supporting Mohammedanism against it, but there can be no two opinions as to the superiority of the Mohammedan over the pagan. If he could be certain that all the Mohammedan converts would eventually be re-converted to Christianity, then probably there would be no more ardent supporter of the preacher of Islam than the Christian missionary.

Coming now to the matter of Christianity and Christian

* The emissaries of El Sennusi are over-running Nigeria, and gaining many converts. Whether they will restrict themselves to peaceful methods, or whether they will preach a *jehad* against Christians and pagans, is as yet uncertain.

Missions, we have before us a subject of the greatest interest and importance, and one offering a wide field for discussion. The principal societies which have established Protestant Missions in this part of Africa are the Church Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and the Scotch United Presbyterians (Old Calabar). With regard to Roman Catholic Missions, the chief representatives are the French, who still maintain stations on the Lower Niger and at a few other places, though their energies are now being chiefly directed to work within their own spheres of influence. The Church Missionary Society commenced operations in West Africa, among the Susus (north of Sierra Leone) in 1804, among the Bulloms in 1812, and at other places near Sierra Leone in 1815. Owing, however, to the opposition of the natives in 1817 and the burning of the mission stations, members of the society were forced to restrict their labours to Freetown, where the seeds of good work were sown among the colonies of liberated slaves. In 1827 the Fourah Bay Institution was established, one of the first students being the afterwards famous Samuel Crowther, Bishop of the Niger; in 1840 the society began a mission to the Timani people; and since then it has lost no opportunity of breaking fresh ground wherever possible. In the Yoruba country mission stations were established in 1846 at Abeokuta and other places, and in 1852 at Lagos; while in the Niger Regions Lokoja was occupied in 1865, Bonny in 1866, Brass in 1868, and numerous other stations in subsequent years.

The Wesleyan Methodists followed the Church Missionary Society to Sierra Leone in 1811; opened a station at Bathurst (Gambia) in 1821, and at McCarthy's Island in 1831, developing rapidly, until in a few years all the more important places on the Gold Coast, Lagos, and the Yoruba interior were occupied; while the Scotch United Presbyterians started work in Old Calabar in 1846, and have been content to confine their operations to the natives of this one district.

From the above summary it will be seen that the amount

of ground covered by the different societies is very considerable, and although it is quite impossible here to describe the step by step development of each society, there are certain matters connected with the Church in West Africa which demand explanation. The enormous mortality among the European missionaries at Sierra Leone—fifty-two deaths had occurred by 1825—and the difficulty of getting sufficient volunteers for the work gave the Church Missionary Society the idea of employing native converts for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, and in 1827 the Fourah Bay College was started at Sierra Leone, with the object of training native agents. On the whole it may be said that the institution has proved a great success,* and, having been affiliated, in 1876, to Durham University, students have since then been able to take their degree without the necessity of visiting England. The first name on the rolls of the College was, as we have said, that of Samuel Crowther, to whose excellent example has been due, in no small measure, the facility with which agents have always been forthcoming to labour among their fellow-countrymen. Samuel Crowther's life was a most remarkable one, and so intimately was it associated with the development of missions in West Africa that no account of the work of the Church Missionary Society in Africa would be complete without some allusion to the "dear old Bishop of the Niger."

In 1821 the Fulahs raided and destroyed the town of Oshogun, in Yorubaland, and amongst the captives carried off into slavery was a pagan woman with three children—a boy of eleven, and two girls. Adjai, the boy, was at once separated from the others and bartered for a horse, but the bargain not proving satisfactory, he was after awhile returned. He was next sold at the slave-market at Ijaye, passed through the hands of four masters, and eventually became one of a slave-gang sold to a

* "The College has been successful whenever it has had a competent principal; but it has at times had to be suspended for want of one, owing to sickness or death."—"C.M.S. Atlas, Part I," 1896.

Portuguese slaving captain at Lagos. With 180 other victims he was placed on board the slaver to commence the voyage across the Atlantic, but the day after leaving Lagos the ship was captured by H.M.S. *Myrmidon*, and its human cargo taken to Sierra Leone and set free. Adjai was placed under the care of the Mission schoolmaster at Bathurst, and proved himself so apt a pupil that within six months he had learned to read, and had been made a monitor in the school. He acquired also a knowledge of carpentry and masonry, and, in 1825, on being baptised, he took the name of Samuel Crowther. In the following year he visited England with the schoolmaster and his wife, and for some months attended the parish school at Islington; it was then decided that he should return to Sierra Leone to form one of the first batch of students at the new Fourah Bay College. Not long afterwards he was promoted to be an assistant teacher in the college, and, in 1829, he married a girl, who, like himself, had been captured and set free in childhood. From 1830 to 1834 he and his wife had charge of different mission schools, and in the latter year Samuel Crowther returned to the College as tutor, remaining there for nearly seven years. The Niger Expedition of 1841* gave the Church Missionary Society the opportunity of putting to the test the value of native agency, and Crowther was selected to accompany Mr. Schön, who formed such a high opinion of the young African that he recommended him to the society for ordination. Accordingly, in 1842, the future Bishop of the Niger was summoned to England, and, after undergoing a course of study at the Islington College, took holy orders at the hands of the Bishop of London on the 11th June, 1843—the first on the roll of native African clergy.

Samuel Crowther's return to West Africa was the occasion for great rejoicing among the native Christians of Sierra Leone, but he was not destined to stay long with them, for, in 1845, he was deputed to assist the veteran Gollmer in founding the mission to the Yorubas. Thus the former

* *Vide* page 32.

slave boy, Adjai, returned to the land of his birth, and, strange to say, met his mother and sisters, whom he eventually converted to Christianity. For the next few years he laboured at Abeokuta, then visited England for the third time, and, in 1854, accompanied Dr. Baikie's expedition up the Niger River.* In 1855 he was back again at Abeokuta, and the two following years he spent at Lagos, where he commenced to translate the Bible into the Yoruba language. Once more he accompanied Dr. Baikie to the Niger, when the wreck of the *Dayspring* and the enforced detention of its crew gave Crowther the opportunity of preaching the Gospel to the pagans and Mohammedans of the Middle Niger. From this time the Niger became his special care, and he soon had mission stations, all along the banks of the river as far as the confluence.

On the 29th June, 1864, Samuel Crowther was consecrated first Bishop of the Niger Territories by Bishop Blomfield in Canterbury Cathedral, and he continued his labours for the next twenty-seven years in the Niger Territories and in the Oil Rivers, dying at his post on the 31st December, 1891, respected and beloved by everyone. The creation, in 1864, of a Native Episcopate was never for a moment a cause for regret, though at the time it was considered a somewhat bold experiment, and so fully did Samuel Crowther justify the expectations that had been formed of him that it is not too much to say that the spread of Christianity on the West Coast of Africa is mainly due to the rescue in 1821 of the little slave-boy, Adjai.

To revert to Church matters at Sierra Leone, the original headquarters in West Africa of the Church Missionary Society: we have seen how the natives themselves were gradually attracted, chiefly by means of the Fourah Bay College, to the field of evangelism. The advantages of being able to train up and utilise the services of Africans were immense, for, owing to the deadly nature of the climate, European missionaries were ever scarce, and could

* *Vide* page 511

survive but a short residence on the Coast, which precluded their acquiring a thorough knowledge of the numerous native languages. Moreover, the influence exercised by a negro preaching to negroes was naturally far greater than that of a white man ; the negro knew the ways of his fellow-countrymen, he could talk to them in their own language, whereas the European missionary who addressed his congregation by means of an interpreter was regarded with a certain amount of suspicion. The white man's God must be white, the simple pagan would argue, and could have no concern in the affairs of the black man ; but to see a man of their own colour upholding the new faith gave them confidence. Gradually a native Church was raised up at Sierra Leone, with well-ordered congregations and native ministers. It became self-supporting and self-ministering, and, as it grew, it aimed at higher things—the despatch of native evangelists into the heathen and Mohammedan countries. Native missions were rapidly established throughout West Africa, and the matter of superintendence became a great difficulty, it being impossible for the Bishop of Sierra Leone to look after such distant stations, as, for instance, those in the Niger Territories. The *Church Missionary Intelligencer* of May, 1864, thus sums up the situation : “ The opportune moment appears to have arrived when the Native Church should be still further empowered to go forth, and, with a holy freedom, do the Lord's work in Africa, and as the Native Christian has been raised to the ministry, so the native ministry be permitted to culminate into a Native Episcopate.”

Such, in brief, was the outcome of the Church Missionary Society's efforts in West Africa ; and the Wesleyan and other societies were at the same time doing equally good work. The heathen was attacked in all directions, and ministers, Bible-readers, and catechists were distributed throughout those regions which were at all inclined to receive them, until, now, wherever the British flag has been hoisted, there will be found the Mission Station.

Education is one of the principal objects of all the

Missionary Societies in West Africa, and it is undoubtedly a most satisfactory way of civilising the people, and of making them understand the superiority of Christianity to paganism. The more important of the chiefs, although they themselves may be unwilling to lose the power which they wield through the juju-man, are generally anxious that their children should attend the schools and acquire a good education, which may afterwards be turned to account for trading purposes. Religion is, of course, taught in these schools, and it is in the next generation that the results may be expected to show themselves to fuller advantage. Many Missions make a point of teaching useful trades to the natives, and their industrial schools have done excellent service in turning out well-trained carpenters, coopers, and the like, who have no difficulty afterwards in finding remunerative employment.

The Church Missionary Society has also of late years recognised the fact that the people, especially in the more remote parts, are immensely impressed by any medical services which Europeans are able to render to them, and efforts are now being made to put in the field a certain number of qualified medical missionaries. In addition to this, missionaries are encouraged to undergo a nine months' course of elementary medicine and surgery at the Livingstone College, Leyton, for the purpose of gaining sufficient knowledge to take care of themselves, and to be able to treat simple cases among the natives; while dispensaries are rapidly being established in connection with West African mission stations. All this is a move in the right direction, for it is quite certain that the healing of one negro will bring more converts to Christianity than the preaching of a score of sermons.* A knowledge of medicine, however slight, is looked on by the native as witchcraft;

* McWilliam wrote in 1841, "I feel confident that medicine and surgery, judiciously exercised, will form important elements in any endeavour to civilise the tribes on the banks of the Niger. The same will obtain, I believe, throughout Africa. The Africans have the most sacred confidence in the power of medicine. Medical practitioners are nowhere more respected."

a cure effected is regarded as a miracle, and soon becomes noised abroad; the missionary is the hero of the hour, and the people begin to think that there must be some truth in what they have been told of the white man's God. In this respect the Mohammedan is as easily influenced as the pagan, for with all his vaunted superiority he has a firm belief in the efficacy of charms, as evidenced by the common cure for all ills. A *mallam* writes a verse of the Koran on a piece of paper or on a board, which is then washed in water, and the water administered to the patient. Thus, in all probability, there is no more effectual method of approaching the Mohammedans of the Western Sudan than by the medium of medical missionaries, and the attempted evangelisation of these Mohammedans is the great problem which Bishop Tugwell and the members of the Church Missionary Society are now endeavouring to solve.

The problem is of very great interest, for, as is well known, Christianity, in other parts of the world, makes little or no way with Mohammedans. Here, however, it is claimed that circumstances are different; the majority of the Mohammedans are converts, and not in any way fanatical, and, therefore, it is thought, they will be likely to listen to Christian preachers. It is on the Hausas that the Sudan missionaries propose making a beginning, their language being widely spoken, and suitable for purposes of translation; and now that the country is being brought more under British control the danger of preaching against Islam (the punishment for which has hitherto been death) will be greatly minimised. That there are enormous difficulties to be overcome even the most sanguine supporters of this noble scheme will admit; the Mohammedan might, perhaps, be persuaded to substitute the Cross for the Crescent were he permitted to retain such social habits as he deems essential to his very existence—slave-holding and polygamy, for instance. Whether these things can be made to disappear like the cannibalism and human sacrifices of the pagans, or whether the influence of Christian missionaries will break up the

old customs of the people, are matters which time alone can decide.

One thing is certain : as long as polygamy and domestic slavery exist, Christianity can make no great strides among either Mohammedans or pagans. To expect a pagan chief to discard thirty-nine of his forty wives, to illegitimise, say, a hundred children, and to free all his domestic slaves, in order to become a Christian, is, of course, absurd. So also with the Mohammedans : a change of faith would be little to their worldly advantage. Domestic slavery may, in the distant future, be abolished by law ; but no British official will ever interfere in the matter of polygamy, which must remain the chief obstacle to the conversion of the Mohammedans.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME SCRAPS OF FOLK-LORE.

Folk-lore and Anthropology—Ibo Twins—Traditions—Creation Myths—Gods and Giants—Origin of Man—Historical Legends—Local Legends—The Leopard-King of Iddah—Magic and Witchcraft—Fortune-telling—Birds of Omen—Superstitions about Animals—Sneezing—Finger-nails—Folk-tales—Animal Fables—Fairy Tales and Fairy Music—Proverbs.

POSSIBLY the more general term “Anthropology”^{*} would at first sight seem to be more appropriate to the matter to be dealt with in this chapter; but, having already treated of the customs and religious beliefs of the pagans, we propose confining ourselves now to the native superstitions, traditions, myths, etc., the origins of which are usually unknown to the people themselves; and, in laying before the reader some of the folk-tales of the country, we hope to enable him to compare the mental condition of the native of these parts with that of other savages. A primitive country like that under discussion offers to the student of folk-lore much that is interesting, since he finds actually in existence customs and beliefs which, among more civilised people, are merely the survivals of derelict beliefs and ancient traditions. A few centuries hence, doubtless, the present religious ideas of the negro will have been relegated to the domains of folk-lore pure and simple, though there will be little difficulty, with the plethora of literature on the subject, in solving many of the various mysteries. A visitor to the Niger, say in the

* “Anthropology is the science which deals with savage beliefs and customs in *all* their aspects; folk-lore deals with them in one of their aspects only—namely, as factors in the mental life of man, which, having survived in the highest civilisations, whether of ancient or modern times, are capable of surrendering much of the history of that mental life to the scientific observer.”—Folk-Lore Society’s Publications.

twenty-second century, may find the picaninnies insulting each other by the holding up of two fingers ; the origin will not be far to seek when reference is made to old books on the country, for nowadays no grosser insult can be offered to an Ibo woman—implying as it does that she is the mother of twins.*

The traditions of the people are, as a whole, decidedly poor, and devoid of any great imagination. Their creation myths, where such are found, not unfrequently show traces of European or Arab origin, and even in cases where the people have speculated as to the beginning of all things, they appear to have got no further than the idea that the world always existed in its present form, but that its inhabitants have undergone a change. In those parts where the priesthood has become fully developed, we find tolerably complete accounts of the dawn of the world, handed down from generation to generation of the priests, and doubtless added to and improved by each generation. Before the earth was peopled by men, say the Yorubas, there was always Olorun, the great god of the firmament, and by him another god, Obatala, was created and placed in charge of all things connected with the firmament and earth. For Obatala was created also a goddess-wife, named Odudua, who bore a boy and a girl named respectively Aganju and Yemaja. The brother and sister married, and had a son called Orungan, whose evil doings brought about the violent death of his mother, at which event there sprang from her body fifteen gods and goddesses. On the spot where Yemaja died, runs the legend, the town of Ifé was built, and was for many centuries considered as a sacred city. In this manner the Yorubas account for the creation of their gods, by whom at one time the world was, they maintain, alone inhabited. As to the period of man's creation opinions differ, some holding that the first couple were made out of mud by Obatala ; others that they came from Yemaja's body with the gods, and

* *Vide* page 231: In Benin the holding up of two fingers has an entirely different meaning, as explained by Captain Boisragon in his "Benin Massacre."

that they were named Obalofun (Lord of Speech) and Iya (Mother).

Among other tribes the following myth is not uncommon: In the beginning a god created three white men and three white women, and a similar number of black men and women. Before the twelve he placed a covered calabash and a folded piece of paper, commanding them to choose between the two. The black people chose the calabash, and the white people the paper; and when each was opened, it was found that the former contained some scraps of metal, while on the latter were inscribed full instructions for making everything, which implied that the black people were to be for ever subservient to the white. This myth cannot be of very ancient origin, as six centuries ago white people were probably unknown to the negroes, and, at any rate, paper was a thing unheard of.* As with most primitive conceptions of the original population of the earth, the manlike gods were followed by giants, who issued from the sea and the rivers and lived with men, fighting their battles, performing marvellous feats, and leaving their marks behind them in the shape of colossal rocks, into which they were frequently turned by the witchcraft of some cunning man. But the giant has not retained such an important place in negro folk-tales as he has in our own fairy stories; in fact, he is but seldom mentioned, possibly because the pagan believes that giants and spirits of all kinds, though usually invisible, still actually exist, and are not to be trifled with. Of historical legends there are few, if any, relating to very early times, and the peopling of the coast regions is ascribed to a period considerably after the introduction of Islam into Africa, the present inhabitants holding the tradition that they originally came from the interior, whence they were driven south by Mohammedan warriors. The reason that they were not wholly exterminated is accounted for by the fact that the Mohammedans fought on horseback, and were

* By some of the West Coast tribes the origin of man is traced to a gigantic spider, but this is, perhaps, merely the outcome of totemism:

consequently unable to follow the pagans into the forest country.

Local legends,* of course, are prevalent, though they are not, as a rule, of any particular originality. The following story related of the first Attah or king of the Igaras (Lower Niger) may be regarded as a variant of the Romulus and Remus myth, and to contain in it something akin to totemism. "In the days when Iddah was but a village, a woman from Ohimoje chanced to find her way thither. Whilst there she had occasion one day to visit the neighbouring bush in search of firewood, and, being great with child, brought forth a boy before she could return to the village. Now, the woman was afraid to bring her child back with her, so she left it in the bush at the mercy of the wild beasts. It happened that a female leopard, passing that way in search of food, espied the infant, and, taking it up, conveyed it to her lair, where she reared it with her own cubs. The child in time grew up, and the foster-mother, having observed the way of human beings, was troubled about his nakedness. She therefore repaired to the neighbourhood of Iddah, and lay in wait for a passer-by. After some time there came a man from the town, and on him the leopardess threw herself, carrying off his cloth and cap to her foster-child. As the boy advanced in years, the leopard became anxious that he should associate with human beings, and for this purpose guided him to the outskirts of Iddah, where she left him. The young man entered the town, and the first thing that met his gaze was a fight between two of the inhabitants. He at once took upon himself the duties of arbiter, rebuking the one and commending the other. So astonished were the people who had during the incident crowded round him, that they immediately proclaimed him their king, and refused to permit him to leave the town. This was the first Attah, and he married wives of the people, and had children bold and intrepid as leopards. But he was destined

* The more important pagan kingdoms maintain, at court, an official whose sole duty is to recount the traditions and hand down the history of the kingdom.

to see once again his strange foster-mother. The leopardess was about to die, and came to take a last farewell of the child she had reared. The Attah recognised her, and clinging to her, begged that she would remain with him. This was, however, not to be, for the aged beast, freeing herself, ran to a certain spot in the town, and, throwing herself down, expired. The Attah, following on her tracks, flung himself on the corpse and died also; and the people, finding the two dead bodies, buried them together where they lay, with all the honours due to royalty. The burial spot has ever since been held sacred, and is called Azaina, or the Grave of the Leopard, where to this day the Attahs of Iddah are interred."

In a country where superstition reigns supreme, and where every misfortune is ascribed to the evil disposition of some kind of spirit, where death, even in old age, is regarded as unnatural and the result of witchcraft, it is not wonderful that omens, good and ill, are extensively believed in. Seers, fortune-tellers, magicians, and witches are to be found in every tribe—generally either belonging to the priesthood or in the employment of the priests. The methods adopted by the fortune-teller are not peculiar to West Africa, and, since the simple-minded people are over-awed by the very name of magic, it requires but little ingenuity to deceive them. A handful of nuts, a few cowries, some scraps of leather, or pieces of stick are thrown on the ground, and from the positions in which they fall the fortune-teller professes to be able to read the events of a lifetime. Apart from the wizards and the fortune-tellers, there exist very numerous popular beliefs, upheld no doubt by the priests, but apparently as old as the tribes whose members put faith in them, and in most cases without even a myth to account for them. There are lucky days and unlucky days, but these, when affecting a whole tribe, are usually connected with some historical or traditional event, the defeat of a powerful enemy, or the tragic death of some old king or warrior, and, so far, Zadkiel and the heavenly bodies have played no part in shaping the destiny of the negro.

In the matter of omens each tribe has its own peculiar beliefs, though a comparison shows that many of the ideas are very widely diffused. Thus, the cries or actions of certain birds foretell calamities to the individuals who hear them or to the village over which they fly while uttering the cry. Impending war is foretold to the Igbiras of the Benué River by the cry of the crested crane, as it is to the people of the Slave Coast by the flocking of the hooded crow and of vultures. The owl is everywhere a bird of ill-omen, and his cry heard at night implies death in the family of the hearer—usually a sudden or violent death, known as “Owl’s death.” So dreaded is the owl, in fact, that the people fear even to mention its name, speaking of it as “the bird that makes one afraid,” or by some similar expression, and the Ewès regard it as a cannibal and the messenger from cannibals. The crow also has an evil reputé, and is considered to be in league with cannibals and with various malignant spirits; no rain falls where it lays its eggs, and the most powerful juju can be made from its feathers and flesh. While on the subject of bird-omens, we may give a few other instances; cocks that crow in the middle of the night bespeak death, which can only be averted by the immediate despatch of the offending bird. The cry of the black and white kingfisher is a good omen when heard to the right, a bad one if heard to the left. The long-tailed Whydah-bird is held sacred in Dahomey, because one of the early kings returning from a victory is said to have been met by a flock of these birds, who sang his praises; and certain women, not only of Dahomey, but also of Yoruba, are supposed to be able to converse with the bird. Then there is the African pheasant, whose shrill note of alarm is considered to have the power of bursting the gun of anyone firing at it—a power ascribed also to a species of monkey and to a species of antelope.

The superstitions connected with animals are as numerous as those relating to birds. The fur of a hare protects the house from fire; to kill a jackal brings calamity; a dog beaten to death and hung by the heels to a scaffold

in the market-place prevents disease; the tail of a cow, horse, or goat waved in front of a man turns the missiles of his enemy; while it is believed that any town in which the wild cat beats its tail three times on the ground will shortly be deserted. The Yorubas and adjacent tribes say that the porcupine, before going to look for food, shakes its quills in order to divine what the result of the search will be; and the tortoise is credited with causing mirages, by making a subterranean fire to burn and destroy the roots of trees.* There are likewise certain fabulous beasts said to exist in the recesses of the forest; the Aja of the Egbas is a dwarf, who carries off men to the bush and teaches them magic and medicine; while a somewhat similar beast, "erect, man-like, and loud-voiced, teaches the hunter fetish, and makes him wondrous brave."

Among the Ibos, children who cut the upper teeth first are killed, as showing signs of being possessed of an evil spirit. Sneezing forebodes a coming misfortune with most of the tribes, while some suppose that the indwelling spirit of the sneezer is in pain, and in consequence it is customary to wish him long life and good health, a survival of which is to be found in our "God bless you," and the Mohammedan "Allah," as similarly used. The belief in magic and witchcraft of course accounts for the superstitions connected with nail-parings and cuttings of hair, the possession of which by an evil-disposed person can be utilised for working ill against the individual from whom they have been removed; and for this reason a native is careful to destroy such things after performing his toilet. To show what importance is attached to nails and hair, we may mention here that in the case of a man dying abroad it is quite sufficient for burial purposes to cut off from the corpse portions of these articles and convey them home for the due performance of the funeral ceremonies.

West African folk-tales can hardly be compared with those of Europe and Asia, for though the advance of the Mohammedans is gradually influencing the old stories of

* Ellis' "Yoruba-speaking Peoples, et.:"



BOYS OF ILORIN.

Photo: A. F. Mookler-Ferryman.

the pagans, the negro's intellect is not as yet sufficiently developed to understand the points of such tales as the "Arabian Nights"; but fairy tales not altogether unlike our "Cinderella," "Jack the Giant Killer," etc., are frequently met with. As with all peoples without a written language, story-telling has become, if not actually a fine art, at any rate a profession to certain members of each African tribe, and the story-teller is one of the most important personages at every entertainment. In relating his story he usually accompanies himself with a drum, which he beats to fill up the pauses, and the more telling parts of the dialogue are given in verse or song. Animals are perhaps the principal characters of the fables, which, though somewhat Æsopian in their natures, appear to point to little or no moral, and to be nothing more than anecdotes of beast life, sometimes accounting for some peculiarity in the animal. The same class of story is common enough in Europe; thus, there are fables relating to the shortness of the rabbit's tail, why the hind legs of a hare are longer than the forelegs, and so on. The following is the West African version of the reason why monkeys live in trees: One day a bush-cat, after a fruitless day's hunting, sat down to rest, but was so troubled by fleas that she could get no repose. At last she hailed a passing monkey, whose services she enlisted, and was soon able to go comfortably to sleep. The monkey, however, thought this too good an opportunity to let slip, so tied up the bush-cat's tail to a tree and ran away. At length the bush-cat awoke, and discovering what had happened, called to a snail that was crawling by to come and untie her. This he did, and the bush-cat went home to work out a plan for revenging herself on the monkey. Calling all the animals together, she commanded them to announce her death, and make arrangements for her burial five days hence. On the appointed day, the bush-cat's body was laid out in state, and all the beasts of the field assembled round it; but when the monkey came to mourn the loss of his old enemy, she suddenly sprang up and tried to catch him. The monkey was, however, too quick, and escaped

into the trees, which, from fear of the bush-cat, he has ever since made his home.

In a Yoruba story of the hare, why it has longer ears than most animals, and why it runs away, we get perhaps the origin of Uncle Remus' "Tar-Baby." The story opens with a description of a dry season, when the animals suffered from hunger and thirst, until at last they assembled in council and decided that each animal should cut off the tips of his ears, that the fat from them should be extracted and sold, that the money should be devoted for the purchase of hoes, and that a well should be dug. All this was accordingly done (except that the hare refused to have his ears cut), and the animals slaked their thirst at the well that they had dug. About midday, the hare came along with a calabash dragging behind him, and the noise that it made frightened all the other animals away, so that the hare had the well to himself. First he drank his fill, and then he proceeded to bathe, and in so doing he stirred up the mud at the bottom of the well. The next day the animals discovered what had happened, and not knowing who the offender was, determined to set a trap to catch him. They procured an image, smeared it with birdlime, and set it up near the well, while they concealed themselves close by in the bush. "The hare came," says the Yoruba story-teller; "he approached the image. He never suspected that all the animals were hidden in the bush. The hare saluted the image. The image said nothing. He saluted again, and still the image said nothing.

" 'Take care,' said the hare, 'or I will give you a slap.'

"He gave a slap, and his right hand remained fixed in the bird-lime. He slapped with his left hand, and that remained fixed also.

" 'Oh ! oh !' cried he, 'let us kick with our feet.'

"He kicked with his feet. The feet remained fixed, and the hare could not get away.

"Then the animals ran out of the bush and came to see the hare and his calabash.

" 'Shame, shame, O hare,' they cried together. 'Did you not agree with us to cut off the tips of your ears, and

when it came to your turn, did you not refuse? What! you refused, and yet you come to muddy our water?’

“They took whips, they fell upon the hare, and they beat him. They beat him so that they nearly killed him.

“‘We ought to kill you, accursed hare,’ they said, ‘but no—run.’ They let him go, and the hare fled. Since then he does not leave the grass.”

The tortoise is the hero of many a Yoruba story, and is the embodiment of everything cunning, outwitting all other animals,* and even mankind; while among the Gold Coast tribes his place is taken by the spider. Occasionally there is a moral attached to the tortoise story, usually pointing to the evils of greediness; but, for the most part, the doings of the tortoise are not of a very exciting nature. We will, however, give one example, which describes how the bald-headed elf (as the tortoise is designated) made a bet that he would ride the elephant into town.

“Tortoise went into the forest and met the elephant. He said to him, ‘My father, all the animals say you are too stout and big to come to town.’

“The elephant was vexed. He said, ‘The animals are fools. If I do not come to town it is because I prefer the forest. Besides, I do not know the way to town.’

“‘Oh!’ said the bald-headed elf, ‘then come with me. I will show you the way to town, and you can put all the animals to shame.’

“So the elephant followed him.

“When they were near the town the bald-headed elf said, ‘My father, I am tired. Will you kindly allow me to get on your back?’

“‘All right,’ said the elephant. He knelt down, and tortoise climbed up on his back. Then they went on along the road.

“The bald-headed elf said, ‘My father, when I scratch your back you must run, and when I knock my head against your back you must run faster; then you will

* Cf. *Æsop's fable of the Tortoise and the Hare.*

make a fine display in the town.' The elephant said, 'Very well.'

"When they came near the town, the bald-headed elf scratched the elephant's back, and he began to run. He knocked his back with his head, and the elephant ran faster.

"The animals when they saw this were frightened. They went into their houses, but they looked out of their windows. And tortoise called out to them, 'Did I not say I would ride my father's slave to town?'

"'What do you mean by your father's slave?' said the elephant, growing angry.

"'I am only praising you,' said tortoise.

"But the elephant saw the other animals laughing, and grew more angry. 'I will throw you down on the hard stones here, and break you to pieces,' he cried.

"'Yes, yes, that is right,' said the bald-headed elf. 'Throw me down here. That will be all right. Then I shall not die; then I shall not be hurt. If you really want to kill me, you ought to carry me to a swamp. Then I shall die at once, for the mud and water will drown me.'

"The elephant believed the bald-headed elf; he ran to the swamp, and threw tortoise into the mud. Then he stretched out his foot to kick him, but the bald-headed elf dived into the mire and came up in another place. The other animals were there, looking on, and tortoise called out to them, 'Did I not say I would ride my father's slave to town?'

"When the elephant found that he could not catch the bald-headed elf, he ran away at full speed to the forest. Since then the elephant has not come to town any more."*

Sometimes the tortoise's cunning fails him, as, for instance, when he was caught by the owner of a plantation in the act of stealing his yams, and was smashed to pieces. This misfortune accounts for the seams on his shell, which

* *Uncle Remus* makes Brer Rabbit ride Brer Fox in a very similar manner;

are said to be the joins where he was mended up—a task which fell to the cockroach and the ant. The negro, being of an inquisitive turn of mind, requires an explanation for everything of this kind, and many tales could be quoted wherein is given the reason for the manners and customs of various beasts and birds.

The Yorubas have a proverb, “The flying fox is neither rat nor bird,” which they apply to a man who has no mind of his own, and its derivation comes from the following fable: “The flying fox lay in his house very sick, and there was no one to tend him, so that he died. The neighbours then consulted amongst themselves as to his burial, and called in the birds, saying, ‘Your relation is dead.’ But the birds replied, ‘This is not one of our family, who all wear feathers; this is the flying fox, and he belongs not to us!’ So the neighbours saw that the birds were right, and decided that deceased belonged to the family of rats. The rats were accordingly summoned to bury their relative, but, seeing that it was a flying fox, they said, ‘This is not one of our family; every one of our family has a tail, and the flying fox has none!’ Thus the flying fox, having no relations, remained unburied.”

The strong smell possessed by goats is thus accounted for: “Long ago, before the Portuguese came to the Coast, there was a goddess who was celebrated for the delicate perfume which she emitted, and which was caused by some rare ointment with which she anointed herself. All the animals were delighted with this perfume, but the goats most of all. They took so much pleasure in it that they were bold enough to ask the goddess to give them some of it, so that they might have the perfume always with them, even when she was absent. To this request the goddess seemingly consented; but really, to punish their impertinence, took a pot of bad-smelling ointment, and with this she anointed them. The smell of this ointment was so powerful that it has lasted to this day. The goats, however, were unable to detect the difference in smell, and were very well pleased with their perfume; and, in order to prevent it being washed off, always sought shelter

when rain fell—a habit which their descendants have continued to the present time.”*

These animal stories are, perhaps, the most popular, but there are fairy tales, not unlike some of our own, the general form being descriptive of the visit of a child or other human being to the underground abode of the goblins, and the accumulation of vast wealth. There is, however, this difference between the West African fairy tale and the European: in place of the fortunate finder of treasure bringing it home, marrying a prince, and living happy ever afterwards, the negro girl usually comes to an untimely end by being torn to pieces by wild beasts. Fairy music is firmly believed in, as indeed it was barely a century ago by the more northern Europeans; any particularly popular tune is said to have been learned from the fairies or wood-nymphs. A hunter or a child belated in the forest stumbles on a gathering of fairies dancing and singing; the tunes are of course more beautiful than anything known to human beings, and the listener, on returning home, is able to remember them and teach them to others.† Marriages between men and mermaids, and visits to the palaces under the sea, also form the subject of the higher class of story; while fairy tales in which the hero is possessed of the power of assuming the shape of a hyena or other wild beast are very frequently met with.

From what we have said the reader will be able to make his own comparison between the stock-in-trade of the negro story-teller and the tales related in other parts of the world. A few, it will be noticed, bear a decided resemblance to European stories; whether this is mere accident, or whether a common origin is accountable for the similarity, we will not pretend to say, and it is perhaps unnecessary to remark that the “Uncle Remus” stories are mere adaptations of those of West Africa, carried by the slaves to the West Indian and American plantations.

From stories we come to proverbs, which are held in

* Ellis.

† *Vide* “Up the Niger,” page 280.

high esteem by all the West African pagans, who regard a knowledge of them as a proof of great wisdom. The man who in a palaver can interlard his speech with the apt quotation of proverbs is looked on as a high-class orator, for to be conversant with the hundreds of proverbs of a country which has no written language, and to be able to fit in the right one, must necessitate, at any rate, a good memory. Many convey little or no meaning to Europeans unacquainted with the ins and outs of native manners and customs, but equivalents are to be found for most, if not all, of our own proverbs, and it will be interesting to mention some of these, our equivalent being easily recognisable: "He who boasts much cannot do much"; "Talk in the house makes no man excel"; "Full-belly child says to hungry-belly child, 'keep good heart'"; "Every man's character is good in his own eyes"; "The young cannot teach the elders traditions"; "Gold should be sold to him who knows its value"; "The dawn does not come twice to wake a man"; "You cannot kill game by looking at it"; "The rat has no voice to call the cat to account"; "Famine compels one to eat the fruit of all kinds of trees"; "One tree does not make a forest"; "Where war is, there the drum will be."

In the matter of proverbs and proverbial sayings the Yorubas* probably excel all other West African tribes, and they are very fond of aphorisms in couplet form; thus they say, "Familiarity induces contempt; but distance secures respect." Again, "Sorrow is after weeping, and mortification is after trouble." Puns also are much indulged in, and appreciated as a sign of ready wit; but, without a lengthy explanation of the meaning of the native words, it would be useless giving any examples; and the same may be said of riddles, which, although considered by the people themselves as remarkably clever, are, as a rule, most commonplace.

* *Vide* Ellis' "Yoruba-speaking Peoples."

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

Some Important Problems—Malaria—Modern Science—The Mosquito Theory—*Anopheles*—Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine—Sanitation—Needed Reforms—The Liquor Traffic—Its Connection with the Slave Trade—Foreign Liquor *versus* British Goods—Ruin of Legitimate Trade—The Brussels Act—Spirit Duties—The Future of British Nigeria.

IN the foregoing chapters many matters intimately bound up with the future of British Nigeria have been perforce treated somewhat lightly; to neglect them altogether would be unpardonable, for on the successful solution of the problems which we are about to discuss depend, in no small measure, the prosperity and value to England of her two new Protectorates.

The nature of the climate of this part of Africa and its effect on European residents we have already frequently referred to, and even the untravelled Englishman is cognisant of the fact that there is no more fatal climate in the world than that of the West Coast. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that Nigeria is not uniformly unhealthy, for, away inland, there are many parts where Europeans can live for years and enjoy as good health as in any other tropical country. It is in the Delta of the Niger, in the Oil River Regions, and in the neighbourhood of the main rivers, that the white man suffers most, and the principal cause of the sickness is malaria. Other diseases, of course, occur even in the most healthy parts, but they are not peculiar to West Africa. Dysentery is no more to be feared than elsewhere in the tropics, and laying aside for the moment the matter of fever, the only things likely, as a rule, to affect the white man's health are such petty annoyances as liver, boils, prickly heat, ear-ache, and the *jigger* (*Pulex penetrans*).

A careful study of West Coast statistics reveals the fact that malarial fever is accountable for nine-tenths of the deaths of the Europeans ; how many it invalids home it is impossible to say, since the published figures stop short at deaths. Can this dreaded malaria be driven from the country ? Modern scientists say that it can, and that in the course of time the scourge of West Africa will be swept away.

Hitherto it has been a generally accepted idea that low-lying land with swamps of more or less stagnant water furnished the material for poisoning the air with malaria, which was received into the system by the mere act of breathing. In every book dealing with Africa will be found descriptions of the cause of malaria ; the fever-belt, consisting of the low lands adjacent to the coast, where the heat is great and rendered oppressive and stifling by reason of the copious moisture afforded by the numerous streams and marshes that intersect the country ; the ever-present mangrove swamps, composed of soft, slimy mud, the chief constituents of which are decaying vegetation and rotting seaweed ; the fatal miasma that rises off these swamps at sunset ; and, as one writer says, "there is not a cubic inch of air which is not in the night time impregnated with malaria."

Now, however, we are told that all these theories are at fault ; that there is absolutely nothing in them ; that to drink in the miasma from a fœtid swamp is no more injurious than to inhale a London fog. But that the real cause of all the trouble is the poison injected by a species of mosquito (bred in the pools of the low-lying country), in whose stomach has been discovered the germs of malaria. This is certainly an astounding theory, and it is difficult to believe that for centuries all medical men should have been on the wrong tack, and that ignorance alone should have been the cause of the deaths of thousands of our fellow-countrymen. Still, decade succeeded decade without anyone being able to hold the disease in check ; whatever suggestions were offered, the Coasters died off much as before ; and it is only natural that anything in the way of a new theory should be welcomed.

The originator of the new idea was Dr. Koch, whose investigations of rinderpest at the Cape and the so-called "Texas fever" in East Africa led him to believe that the diseases were transmitted to the cattle by insects. From this he argued that, if insects could inoculate cattle with fever, they would be equally able to produce fever in human beings, and, after a long series of experiments, he came to the conclusion that the mosquito transmitted malaria. "Tropical malaria," he says, "is very easily recognised, and can be cured with certainty," the method of recognising the disease being by microscopic examination of the blood of the patient, from which can be determined the exact moment to administer quinine.

In 1898 was established the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and since then much valuable work has been done in West Africa by the staff of the school. A succession of expeditions has attacked nearly every place on the Coast where Europeans reside, visiting the Oil Rivers, and making investigations even as far inland as Lokoja. The services of Dr. Ross, who had already collected valuable information on the subject of malaria in India, were secured, and he and Dr. Annett have been indefatigable in their crusades against the mosquito, or rather the genus *Anopheles*, which is considered to be the carrier of the disease from an infected to a non-infected person.

It has been discovered that the blood of most native children contains numerous malarial parasites, and that consequently the *Anopheles** after feeding on the children transmits the poison to adult natives and to Europeans. Apparently the mosquito is not a great traveller, as it is considered that by keeping the native dwellings at a distance of half a mile from the European quarters much good will result; though it is on the destruction of the insect in its various life stages that most faith is pinned. To destroy all the mosquitoes of the genus *Anopheles* in West Africa sounds an impossible task, but the members of the Liverpool

* The female insect only.

School are fully convinced that it is feasible. The mosquito, they know, breeds chiefly in puddles, ditches, or any holes where water collects and becomes stagnant; by pouring kerosene oil into these breeding places the insect (in any stage) is destroyed; but prevention is better than cure, and the most obvious and reliable remedy is to make certain that no such breeding grounds exist in the vicinity of European dwellings. This can of course only be brought about by careful and systematic surface drainage, and by constant attention on the part of Europeans, who, unfortunately, on the West Coast of Africa, are proverbially callous in matters of health and in their mode of living.

The confidence displayed by the officials of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in the ultimate success of their great work is unbounded, though they demand from the European residents in West Africa individual support. They, moreover, maintain that absolute immunity from malaria cannot be expected by Europeans unless they learn to accommodate themselves to circumstances, and live in West Africa as Europeans do in other tropical countries, so that their constitutions may not become enfeebled, and their blood sufficiently weak to easily receive the malarial parasite from the mosquito.

To rid the country of malaria, however, must take time, and in the meanwhile the greatest care should be taken in the selection of men for service in Nigeria. A man must be neither too young nor too old. In the first case, an unformed constitution is most liable to suffer from fever; while, in the second case, a man who has adopted certain rules of life is unable to suddenly change everything—live on indifferent food and give up his beer. For a novice the limits of age may perhaps be placed at twenty-two and thirty-two, though when “salted” a man may continue his visits to West Africa up to almost any age. Without health the best-intentioned Government official, missionary, or merchant is able to do nothing. His work ends when his health fails, and though he may have planned vast schemes for improving the country, evangelising the heathens, and for developing trade, his death or departure

for home leaves matters much as he found them on his arrival. Reviewing the past history of the older British possessions in West Africa, it is apparent that the principal cause of failure has been the want of a settled policy. No governor has been able to remain long enough at his post to complete any systematic reforms, and the same thing has applied to the departmental subordinates. There has been no continuity of ideas, for the simple reason that the climate has hitherto restricted the period of a white man's residence to a year or eighteen months at a time. The term climate as generally used is synonymous in West Africa with malaria; if, therefore, malaria can really be made to disappear, we may look to a vast development of the country.

We must not, however, expect too much of the mosquito theory; the wholesale destruction of *Anopheles* may improve the lot of the traders and others who reside in one place, but for the energetic official, constantly on the move, it can do little. To the traveller the risk of malaria must remain for all time; if he makes his journey by water, the canoe which he occupies is the favourite breeding-place of *Anopheles*; if he travels by land, he may find himself (thanks to the carriers) any night without his mosquito curtain. At the same time, it is only fair to say that the official need not necessarily suffer to any great extent from malaria, although mosquitoes may pursue him wherever he goes; for it is an established fact that men who live a healthy life, and take plenty of exercise (without over-taxing their strength) are very seldom invalided—at any rate from Northern Nigeria. By means of such active recreations as polo, cycling, lawn tennis, etc., the body is kept fit and able to throw off the attack of malaria when it comes.

But whether the cause of all malaria is the mosquito, as experts declare, or whether the insect only plays a secondary part in spreading the disease, there can be no doubt that the mosquito crusades referred to above are of immense benefit, since through them the whole question of West Coast sanitation is becoming exposed. The

sanitary arrangements in the majority of the towns and villages are a disgrace to civilisation ; were such a state of affairs permitted to exist in India, the population would be periodically decimated by cholera and other diseases ; but in West Africa the most ordinary precautions have always been neglected. People in England would not think of living by the side of an open sewer or cesspool, but the Englishman in West Africa thinks nothing of it ; if he gets ill, he puts it down to climate, or to the mosquitoes, forgetting that, under similar circumstances, he would have contracted disease in any country. What is wanted is a thorough cleansing of the Coast, conducted by a sufficient staff ; a few sanitary inspectors here and there are of little use ; whole battalions of scavengers are required for the first operations, after which it would require little labour to keep things in order. No expense should be spared in the great work of sweeping clean these Augean stables, and if the Government took the matter seriously in hand, the cost would probably be covered in a couple of years by the saving in passage money of inviolated officials and their successors.

The next important subject (which fortunately concerns only *Southern Nigeria*) is the liquor traffic, *i.e.* the sale of spirituous liquors by Europeans to the natives, carried on to a greater or less extent from the time when Europeans first visited the Coast. The slave-trade fostered the sale of arms, powder, and liquor ; the former articles were necessary to the chiefs for raiding to procure slaves, and were written off when the bills for the slaves were paid ; while the actual payment was made principally in liquor. But when the slave-trade was abolished the demand for these articles did not diminish ; powder and guns were still much in request for interior warfare, and the taste for drink had taken possession of the people to such an extent that its eradication appeared hopeless. "The wealth and importance of the various villages," wrote Joseph Thomson in 1886, "are measured by the size of the pyramids of empty gin bottles which they possess." The trader saw nothing wrong in flooding the country with

gin; it had become the staple import, the chiefs would take little else in exchange for their palm oil, and the numerous Kru labourers refused to be paid in anything but powder and spirits.

It is needless here to descant on the evil effects of drink on the people; we have evidence enough much nearer home of the state of degradation to which it reduces the lower classes, and this where drink is expensive; what is the condition of things in a country where an ordinary man can get drunk for rather less than a farthing can be easily imagined. It is a question of which the argument is all on one side, for no sane man, however anti-temperance his ideas may be, would attempt to deny that the wholesale introduction of spirituous liquors into West Africa has been otherwise than a curse to the country. The evils may, we admit, be exaggerated, but that any benefits accrue to the natives from their being able to obtain cheap spirits the trader himself cannot pretend. Yet he will argue, and be supported in his argument by many colonial officials, that the outcry against the liquor traffic is absurd; he adduces reliable evidence to prove that drunkenness in West Africa is barely appreciable, and that the average consumption of spirits on the Coast is less by a quarter of a gallon per head per annum than that of Great Britain. These statements are very possibly quite true, but they form a weak defence, for the absence of visible drunkenness leads to the belief that either the drinking is carried on in private, or that the natives have, by long use, become spirit-proof, and the latter supposition would be upheld by anyone who witnessed an Oil River native toss off a tumbler of raw gin. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence as to the existence of drunkenness on occasions of religious ceremonies and festivities; the Rev. James Johnson mentions an instance, which came to his knowledge, of a great funeral at which liquor to the value of £500 was consumed, and it is an acknowledged fact that nearly every Niger Coast chief is an habitual drunkard, lying drunk for days together in his house.

But even if it could be proved that the sale of alcohol

to the natives did not demoralise them, there are other reasons which should induce the British, at any rate, to endeavour to check or even suppress the liquor traffic. The rum and gin come almost entirely from America, France, and Germany,* and, as Major Lugard wrote in 1897, "The importation of liquor enormously decreases the importation of Manchester and Birmingham goods. The cry is for 'new markets,' and the daily papers teem with unpleasant statistics which go to prove that our trade supremacy is being wrested from us by Germany; yet here in our Crown colonies and protectorates we forego the market that might be ours, and substitute foreign-made goods for our own, from which we derive no profit except such as accrues from a small portion of the carrying trade. Secondly, the purchase of an article which, whether it be pernicious or not, is in any case a merely sensual pleasure, effects nothing towards the elevation of the race in the standard of living, and does not promote habits of thrift or industry. If utensils, agricultural implements, or such-like goods were purchased instead of liquor, not only would the African be raised in the plane of civilisation, but the output of his industry, enhanced by improved appliances, would be greater and of better quality."† A leading article in the *Times* of the 7th June, 1895, put the matter clearly: "The extension of the trade in spirits is made at the cost of the trade in other European goods. The native who buys gin buys little else, and in those markets in which the green packing cases of imported spirits are seen, other European goods do not appear. It is the case of one trade or the other, but not of both. The spirit trade, like a noxious weed, chokes every other growth in those districts in which it is allowed to flourish. The solution of the material difficulty is to be found in this pregnant fact: while we allow the newly opened channels

* In 1894 Lagos (the nearest British Colony to the Niger) imported 1,031,261 gallons of gin and 832,370 gallons of rum, of which 1,029,457 gallons of gin and 806,503 gallons of rum came from Germany.

† *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1897.

of communication with the interior to be used for the dissemination of the spirit traffic, we destroy with one hand what we are creating with the other.”

Until 1890 no attempt was made (except by the Royal Niger Company) to check the importation of spirituous liquors, but in that year the Brussels Conference (at which the representatives of seventeen Powers were assembled) took the matter seriously in hand, as second only in importance to the slave-trade—the primary object of the Conference. The Powers were unanimous in their condemnation of the liquor traffic in Africa, and by the Act* which was passed, and afterwards ratified by the Powers, certain restrictions on the African spirit trade came into operation on the 2nd April, 1892. By Article XC. the zone to be affected by the provisions of the Act was laid down as extending across the entire breadth of Africa (including adjacent islands within 100 miles of the coasts) between the 20th parallel of north latitude and the 22nd parallel of south latitude. Article XCI. prohibited absolutely the importation of spirits into, or their manufacture in, any part of the zone where the trade had not so far penetrated or where the religious beliefs of the people were against the introduction or use of spirits.† This Article also imposed a minimum duty (6½d. per gallon) on all spirits imported into those parts of the zone where there was an existing spirit trade. Again, by the same Article, each Power agreed to declare within six months the extent of its possessions infected by or free from a traffic in liquor; while Article XCV. provided that the Powers should periodically give full information to each other about the traffic in alcoholic liquors carried on in their respective possessions or spheres. An optional revision of the General Act of the Conference was arranged to take place on the 2nd April, 1895, and a further obligatory revision on the 2nd April, 1898. Neither of these revisions took place, but the Powers met at Brussels in 1899, and,

* Known as the Brussels General Act, 1891-2.

† *i.e.* The Mohammedan countries;

amongst other things, increased the minimum duty to 2s. 9d. per gallon.

Since the passing of the Brussels Act considerable agitation has been going on in England in the matter of this pernicious trade, and thanks to the untiring energy of such Associations as the "Native Races and Liquor Traffic United Committee" and the various missionary societies, the British Government has been persuaded to take steps for its suppression. The duties on spirits have been gradually raised throughout British West Africa, and in Southern Nigeria the duty is now 3s. per gallon; while in Northern Nigeria the import of spirituous liquor is prohibited. Were all the Powers thoroughly in earnest, and actually desirous of abolishing the West African liquor traffic, there would be no difficulty in the matter, but such a revenue-producing commodity is held to be too valuable to be allowed to disappear altogether. The French in Dahomey, for instance, have always imposed as low a duty as possible, and liquor can be smuggled into British territory with ease.

It is a curious fact that the revenue appears to increase with the raising of the liquor duties in Southern Nigeria, for there has been little falling off in the amount of liquor purchased by the natives, even although the duty has been of late years increased from 6½d. to 3s. It would, therefore, seem as if the Brussels Act had so far effected nothing towards restricting the sale of spirits to the Coast natives, and it is the unanimous opinion of all who have studied the question that no amount of duty will ever prevent the chiefs from obtaining rum and gin, though a heavy duty may make these articles too expensive for the ordinary native. It is, however, impossible for Great Britain to work single-handed, for if she prohibited the import of spirits into any of her West Coast possessions, the natives would convey their produce into the neighbouring French or German colonies, whence liquor could be readily brought into British territory, and Kru labour would then in all probability be diverted from the British colonies. The time is hardly yet ripe for total prohibition in Southern Nigeria, and any action tending in this direction

must necessarily be gradual, though whatever line England adopts in order to reduce the evils of the traffic to a minimum, the support of the other Powers concerned is absolutely imperative.

In the infected regions of the Coast events must, as we say, move slowly, and we must be content with even the smallest signs of progress towards the eventual abolition or curtailment of the traffic ; it is in the non-infected regions, which are now being rapidly connected with the Coast by roads and railways, that immediate action is necessary, so as to prevent the introduction of spirits into Northern Nigeria. This, by the provisions of the Brussels Act, Great Britain has pledged herself to do, though there are, unfortunately, loopholes by which the Act can be partially evaded, it being easy to prove that many of the chiefs of the interior have for a long while been supplied with gin and rum by natives trading with the Coast, and that even the Mohammedans (contrary to the commands of the Prophet) have become addicted to drink. To remedy this, the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria has prohibited in the protectorate the sale and even the possession of trade liquor ; and he has, moreover, established a preventive service along the southern frontier to check smuggling, so that no intoxicating liquors can pass into the Mohammedan countries.

The whole question of the liquor traffic, it will be seen, is one of very great importance, and worthy of the attention of all Englishmen who have at heart the reputation and commercial prosperity of their own country and the welfare of the natives of Africa. By the continuance of the traffic on the coast, we repeat, Manchester and Birmingham are losing valuable markets for their goods, while the gin producers across the Channel are growing wealthy ; this fact alone should appeal even to the Englishman (if there exists such an one) who is averse to philanthropy, morality, temperance, missionary labours, or the civilisation of the negro. We will conclude by quoting from a speech made at Grosvenor House by Sir George Goldie (May 3rd, 1895): " I speak from sixteen years' experience

. . . and I say confidently that unless immediate steps are taken to stop this traffic—not by higher duties, but by absolute prohibition—a state of things will soon be brought about that must ultimately lead to the entire abandonment of the country. . . . I cannot believe that the conscience of Europe will long allow that the vast populous regions of tropical Africa should be used only as a cesspool of European alcohol.”

We have dwelt on these two matters because, affecting as they do the health of the white man and the health and morality of his black brother, we deem them of vital importance to the future of Nigeria (and indeed of the whole of British West Africa). Unless they are seriously and immediately grappled with, little good can result from the long years of toil, the vast expenditure of money, and the sacrifice of the lives of the countless brave Englishmen that the development of the country has so far required. Force of arms will do much to put down slave-raiding, human sacrifices, and cannibalism, and to establish the *Pax Britannica* of which we justly boast; but the encouragement of science and morality must needs go hand in hand with the stronger measures.

That Nigeria was acquired for the British Empire, and not allowed to pass into the hands of France and Germany, was, as we have shown, the merest chance. But for the foresight and energy of one Englishman—Sir George Goldie—the present Northern protectorate would probably long since have been added to the French Sudan; and it was only by what may be described as a “short neck” that the race for the Oil Rivers was won from Germany. The past is, however, done with; experience has, perhaps, been dearly bought; but the cost must be buried with the past, and the sole thought be of the future. British Nigeria has become a Government affair; it is part of the Empire; and though the present generation may not live to see the extirpation of the mosquito, slavery and slave-raiding abolished, or a Gothenburg system controlling intoxicating liquors in the Southern protectorate, yet it will certainly have the satisfaction of knowing that

the country is on the road to prosperity. But, it may be asked, how will this prosperity benefit Great Britain? On the 1st January, 1900, more than three-quarters of a million of money was invested in Nigeria; it is unlikely that this colossal sum was intended to be spent on pure philanthropy; what return, therefore, is the nation to get for its investment?

The answers to such questions as these are obvious: a trustee does not invest trust money without some knowledge of the value of the investment, and British Ministers are the elected trustees of the nation. Southern Nigeria we know to be a paying concern; of Northern Nigeria we know only that the Royal Niger Company's trading transactions always paid the shareholders 6 per cent. per annum; and that the revenue (from customs, etc.) produced sufficient to pay interest at 5 per cent. on the Public Debt of the Niger Territories, viz. £250,000, and to maintain the establishments necessary for the administration of the country. But, still, it must be remembered that although the Royal Niger Company, as trader, paid a healthy dividend, it was never able, as administrator, to raise sufficient revenue to clear off its initial outlay, or to open up the country as it would have wished. If we accept as a fair valuation the sum paid by Government to the Royal Niger Company on the revocation of the Charter, then we may consider that the expenditure up to the 31st December, 1899, exceeded the revenue by £820,000. Of course, for many years to come there is not the remotest chance of any of this sum being wiped off. If the revenue of Northern Nigeria can meet the current expenditure on the administration and opening up of the country, it will be as much as can be expected for the present—in reality far more than can be expected, considering the work that has to be done.

France and Germany do not grudge a free expenditure of money in their spheres adjoining British Nigeria; they are confident of their investment; and, knowing full well that the outlay will eventually come back to them, they are content to put their hands in their pockets for the

purpose of developing the country. They have, moreover, been spending enormous sums annually for the past quarter of a century or more, and no one can accuse them of having so far made anything out of their African colonies. Why, therefore, should Great Britain pay so much heed to counting the cost of bringing within the reach of her merchants the wealth of a land acknowledged to be a hundredfold richer than any other portion of West Africa? New markets for British merchandise are, as we have pointed out, absolutely necessary, and in Northern Nigeria there exists a vast semi-civilised population ready to receive European goods, and to offer in return articles which are required in Europe. All that is wanted is the establishment in the country of a measure of security and the improvement of communications, so that British traders may be able to reach the inland markets.

Whether the traders will grasp the situation when the whole of the country is ready for them, or whether they will continue to hold aloof from Nigerian trade, we are not prepared to say. Prior to the 1st January, 1900, West African merchants never ceased denouncing the virtual monopoly exercised by the Royal Niger Company, and petitioning for the revocation of its Charter, in order to induce a healthy competition in Niger trade. Yet the High Commissioner, in his report published in February, 1902, makes the following observation:—"In spite of the clamour that the Niger should be thrown open to trade competition, I am unable, after inquiry, to discover any British firms who are willing to enter the field under the principles of free trade without bias or discrimination. The country is now open to them to reap the supposed benefits for which they have so long agitated, but none have come forward to introduce capital or competition, and, so far as I can ascertain, those traders who desired to enter Northern Nigeria have coalesced with the Niger Company, or are debarred, either by lack of capital, or by pre-existing contracts, from becoming their rivals."

If this state of things continues, it will naturally warrant the suggestion, already put forward by those who opposed

the payment to the Royal Niger Company, that the Government is, to all intents and purposes, subsidising a monopoly, in that it has taken on itself the burden of administering the country for the sole benefit of the Niger Company. On the other hand, the amalgamation of small firms with the Niger Company forms as it were a co-operative society representing the trading interests of Great Britain,* and on this point it will be interesting to again quote from Sir F. Lugard's report. "If fair dealing, enterprise, and energy be assured, an amalgamation of European interests may prevent the undue enhancement of prices, and enable the amalgamated trading corporation to set aside capital for extension and development, which else would be absorbed in the struggle of competition. While the wants of natives in a primitive state remain few, enhancement of prices no doubt decreases supply, for the producers, having acquired all the goods they need, will not exert themselves to tap to the full the resources of the land."

Regarding the whole matter from a common-sense point of view, it would seem that, in revoking the Charter of the Royal Niger Company and instituting direct Imperial administration, the British Government has met the wishes of British merchants. That the latter do not benefit thereby to the extent that they imagined is no fault of the Government; and the only possible question that can arise is whether the amalgamation of firms trading in Northern Nigeria has sufficient capital to carry on a trade capable of paying to the Government such duties, etc., as will produce a revenue covering the expenditure. It is, however, early yet to work out details of revenue and expenditure, for the greater part of the expenditure is still initial outlay, and until the great expanse of country from Sokoto to Lake Chad is thrown open

* The same thing exists in Southern Nigeria; for, in 1890, practically all the Oil River merchants amalgamated with the Liverpool "African Association, Limited," which, four years later, came to terms with the Royal Niger Company.



Photo: Mr. G. F. Packer.

TRADING STATION NIGER DELTA.



Photo: A. F. Mockler-Ferryman.

IN SARAGI MARKET PLACE

to British trade no estimate of the revenue can be attempted.*

For the uninitiated it is somewhat difficult to understand what independent British traders want. They objected to the Chartered Company administration of Nigeria, on the grounds that it was impossible to compete with a trading firm that was also sovereign; and now that the administrator has been separated from the trader, they object to the former's methods of preparing the way for trade. Punitive expeditions they declare to be the greatest deterrent of trade prospects, as the natives remain, for at least a generation, suspicious of the white men who establish themselves in the country by force of arms. This is of course quite true, and no one is more fully aware of the fact than the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria, whose policy is now well known to be to have recourse to force only after diplomacy has failed. However, whatever policy be adopted, it is certain that there will always be a large number of persons ready to find fault, though few of them are able to propose reasonable remedies.

Considering the small number of disciplined troops available, it is apparent that punitive expeditions are never likely to be launched without weighing the consequences. In Southern Nigeria they are necessary so long as the pagans adhere to their inhuman practices, and in Northern Nigeria until slave-raiding has been abolished; but it is erroneous to imagine that the political officers favour the employment of Maxim guns to settle difficulties. They know that the future of the country depends on the friendship of the natives; that in Negroland the white man, though he may rule, can never supplant the black man; and that in all probability Great Britain will always have to govern the country through the native chiefs. The establishment of Native Councils and Native Courts in Southern Nigeria is proof enough that the natives

* Under present arrangements with Lagos and Southern Nigeria, the collection of ordinary customs duties is made at the coast, and fixed sums allotted to Northern Nigeria.

are intended to govern their own people, under British supervision ; while in the Northern protectorate the obvious policy is to strengthen the hands of the native ruling classes, and to make them responsible to Great Britain for the welfare of their country and its people. The Fulahs, in spite of their slave-raiding propensities, are undoubtedly born rulers ; they conquered the country over which they rule, and they have been for a hundred years the dominant race. They are a shrewd people, intelligent and well-informed, and intercourse with them has shown that they are what may be described, for want of a better term, the "gentlemen" of the Western Sudan. As a race they are supposed to be on the decline ; yet there is no other people ready to replace them, for it is doubtful if the Hausas—the only rivals of the Fulahs—have sufficient capacity or intellectual ability to ever become rulers. It is through the Fulahs, therefore, that Northern Nigeria in the future must, if possible, be governed, the British political officers watching over them, holding them in check, supporting them, and giving them to understand that as just rulers they will ever be upheld, but that any oppression of their subjects will be dealt with summarily.

The outlook in British Nigeria, if not actually brilliant, is decidedly satisfactory. The Southern protectorate is *un fait accompli*, and moreover pays its way ; the Northern protectorate is a land of great expectations, and, with the knowledge that the British Government is in earnest, Englishmen may rest assured that the seeds that have been sown, though they may take time to germinate and mature, must eventually yield a harvest whose riches will be shared alike by white man and black man.

APPENDIX I.

NOTES ON THE PRODUCTS OF NIGERIA.*

ALOE, *see* FIBRE.

BAOBAB (*Adansonia digitata*); Monkey Bread fruit, Ethiopian Sour Gourd, the *Kuka* of Bornu. The trunk of the tree is often twenty or thirty feet in diameter, while the height seldom exceeds forty feet. Widely distributed. The bark yields excellent fibre for paper-making, etc. Fruit acid with medicinal properties. It is in leaf and flower during the rains.

BENISEED (*Sesamum indicum*); gingelly, sesame. Cultivated for its seeds, which yield a plentiful oil, used for soap and as a substitute for olive oil. Grows to a height of about four feet; is cut and dried like hay, when the pods burst and the seeds are collected, washed, bleached, and the oil extracted by pressure. Exported. *Sesamum indicum* is known as black beniseed; white beniseed is a very similar plant, and is called scientifically *Polygala butyracea* or *rarifolia*. Sells in the Liverpool market at about 15s. per cwt.

CALABAR BEAN (*Physostigma venenosum*); the Ordeal Bean, or *Eseré*, of Old Calabar. Large perennial climber.

CAMWOOD (*Baphia nitida*); Barwood. A shrub (indigenous) growing to a height of ten feet. The wood gives a deep red dye, much used by the natives to stain their bodies and for fetish purposes.

CAPSICUM (*Capsicum annuum*); chillies, red pepper. Low-growing annual. The ripe fruit is dried in the sun, and ground to powder. Smaller kinds are known as "bird-peppers." Largely cultivated, principally for local use.

CASHEW NUTS (*Anacardium occidentale*). Indigenous tree, resembling walnut. Nuts or seeds eaten roasted, and from

* See also Lindley and Moore's "Treasury of Botany," Cooke's "Oil-Seeds and Oil in the Indian Museum," "Kew Bulletin," Oliver's "Flora of Tropical Africa," Hooker's "Niger Flora," Moloney's "Forestry of West Africa," etc.

them is extracted an oil similar to almond oil. Exported principally to Germany, where they are used for cooking and chocolate manufacture.

CASSAVA (*Manihot utilissima*, and *M. aipi*); Cassada, Mandioc, Manioc. Cultivated for its roots, in many parts the staple food of the natives. Cassava bread is made from meal formed from the grated and pressed root. *M. utilissima* is known as Bitter Cassava, the root juice of which is poisonous, and requires to be extracted before preparing the meal; *M. aipi* is known as Sweet Cassava, and has a non-poisonous root-juice.

CEREALS, *see* GRAINS.

COCOA (*Theobroma cacao*); cultivated in some parts of Nigeria, though so far with no great success, probably owing to the fact that the plant requires careful cultivation for eight years before it arrives at its full bearing stage.

COFFEE. Although two kinds, viz. *stenophylla* and *liberica*, are cultivated successfully at Sierra Leone, coffee does not appear to thrive in Nigeria. Every effort has been made to cultivate it at three of four plantations on the Lower Niger and elsewhere. Plants have also been freely distributed among the more enlightened chiefs, but the High Commissioner for Southern Nigeria, in his report for 1900, says: "I am afraid, unless a considerable rise takes place in price, the cultivation of coffee out here will always be run at a loss."

COIR and COPRAH, *see* FIBRES and PALMS.

COTTON (*Gossypium barbadense*)* grows wild in many parts, and is extensively cultivated in some districts, though more for the purpose of supplying local demands than for export. In the latter respect, as we mentioned in Chapter V., the trade in this article has proved a disappointment. Great hopes were entertained at one time that Manchester would be able to draw largely on West Africa for her supplies, but so far the total annual value of cotton imported into Great Britain from the whole of West Africa has never exceeded a few thousand pounds. During the American War the price of cotton became so high that the West Coast merchants saw an opportunity for developing this trade; they accordingly sent out machinery and started operations in many different parts, chiefly in the neighbourhood of the Gold Coast and Lagos. Little, however, came of the enterprise, for with the conclusion of the American

* *Gossypium herbaceum* and *arboreum*.

War prices fell again, and there was no market for West African cotton.

For the past few years the export of this article even from Lagos and the Gold Coast has been so insignificant that its value has not been separately recorded; while from Nigeria no cotton has ever been exported. It seems extraordinary that this should be the case, when it is known that it grows freely in almost every variety of soil and is cultivated with the minimum of labour; but, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the natives are most conservative in their ideas, and prefer making up their own cloth to purchasing ready-made European material. Another point is that West African cotton (as grown in the British possessions) is of an inferior kind, that grown near Lagos, for instance, being of a brown colour, rough and short. Mr. Scott Elliot says: "The quality is not good, being only about one inch long in staple, and cannot be easily spun over thirty hanks; it is, therefore, only worth about 5d. to 6d. a pound in Manchester. The cotton grown in the country is worked into a fairly strong coarse sheeting by the natives in every village. It is first combed or carded by means of two brushes (boards six to nine inches with handles), studded with vertical steel wires. The lengths are spun into thread, and apparently have to be wound and re-wound two or three times before the thread is in a fit condition for weaving. This process of winding seems to require exposure, and sometimes one sees the threads pegged out in a great square with sides forty to fifty feet long, round which a slave with a spindle walks carefully."

When the natives have been educated up to agricultural pursuits, doubtless the cultivation of cotton will receive due attention, and experiments at the different botanical stations have proved that Egyptian, Sea Island,* and five other varieties can be grown with very little care. It has also been recently discovered that the leaves of the cotton, bruised and prepared with lime-juice and water, form a valuable remedy for dysentery, while cotton seeds provide an oil almost equal to olive oil, and the residue forms an oil cake suitable for feeding cattle.

COTTON TREE, or Silk Cotton Tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*).† Large tree with buttress trunk. The feathery wool

* Or American, *G. barbadense*:

† Kapok.

from the seeds used for stuffing pillows, etc. An oil* from the seeds. Also a gum from the bark used medicinally.

COLA, *see* KOLA.

DYES. *See* under head of CAMWOOD, HENNA, INDIGO, etc. There are numerous other native dyes, amongst which may be mentioned *Ionchocarpus cyanescens* (Country Blue, a species of Indigo); *Cochlospermum tinctorium*, the root of which gives a yellow dye; *Craterispermum laurinum* and *Xylopia polycarpa*, both with a yellow dye from the bark; *Uncaria gambir*, a yellow dye from the leaves; *Grumilea psychotrioides*, *Trichilia hendelotti*, *Rhizophora racemosa* (mangrove), and *Sorghum vulgare* (Guinea corn), red dyes; while the seeds of the common tree *Vitex cienkowski* yield a black dye which is used for ink.

FIBRES. The bark of various trees yields good fibre, used by the natives for cordage, etc. The better kinds are obtained from *Sterculia cinerea*, *Grewia asiatica*, *Sesbania aculeata*,† and the Baobab. A very good fibre is produced by *Triumfetta semitriloba*, while the large climber known as West Indian Filbert (*Entada scandens*) is much used for ropes. Amongst other fibre-producing plants may be mentioned banana, cocoa-nut (coir and coprah), bowstring hemp, jute, various species of aloe,‡ and *Raphia vinifera* (Bamboo palm, African Bass, Piassava); *see* PALMS, PIASSAVA.

FRUITS. None are exported. The following are found either wild or cultivated in different parts of Nigeria: Bananas, custard apples, cocoanuts, figs, guavas, limes, mangoes, oranges, pineapples, plantains, pomegranates, popows (or paw-paws), avocado pears (alligator pears), plums, country-grapes, locusts, monkey bread, melons, tamarinds, water-melons, etc.

GINGER (*Zingiber officinale*). Cultivated. The underground stems (above the roots) are dug up, and when scraped are known as "white ginger," unscraped "black ginger." The export is small.

GRAINS.§ The principal grains or cereals of the country are African Millet (*Pennisetum typhoidium*), Kous, Gero, in Bornu *gussub*; Maize (*Zea mays*), growing to a height of four or five feet, from which is made bread called *kankie* and beer called *pitto*; Rice (*Oryza sativa*), wild and cultivated; Indian

* Worth about £5 per ton.

† The *Danchi* of India.

‡ Chiefly for fishing-nets and small cords.

§ None exported.

Millet, or Guinea corn (*Sorghum vulgare*), the *dawa* of Hausaland, etc., which is sown in April and reaped at the end of December.

GROUND NUTS (*Arachis hypogæa*), earth-pea; widely cultivated and exported. The seeds are used as food, roasted or boiled, by natives and Europeans, making, amongst other things, an excellent, thick pea-soup. They are exported to Europe either with or without the shells, and the oil extracted from them is used as a substitute for olive oil, for delicate machinery, in the manufacture of butterine, pomade, and soap; while the refuse is made up into oil-cake for cattle. Sells in the Liverpool market at about £10 or £15 per ton.

GUINEA GRAINS; Grains of Paradise; Melegueta* pepper (*Amomum melegueta*). Seeds golden brown, hard, and of pungent taste. Used in Africa as spice, in England to flavour wine and beer, as well as in the preparation of cattle medicines. This was the "pepper" exported by the earliest European traders (Captain Windham and others) from Benin and elsewhere. Of late years the demand in Europe seems to have almost ceased.

GUMS (including fossil resin, gum copal, etc.). Numerous varieties, forming an important export trade, are produced by both large trees and small shrubs. *Sterculia tragacantha* (a tree forty or fifty feet in height) yields common gum arabic; *Balsamodendron africanum* (a shrub or small tree), mixed with gum arabic for the market; *Canarium etule*, a scented gum; *Anacardium occidentale*; *Cordyla africana* (large tree); † *Daniellia thurifera*, the Frankincense tree of Sierra Leone (large tree), yielding a scented gum; Ogea gum (Yoruba country), somewhat similar to the last; *Albizzia lebbek* (the Siris tree of India); ‡ *Albizzia brownei*, a fine gum-like copal; *Sarcocephalus esculentis* (Sierra Leone peach); *Acacia mellifera*, *erubescens*, *verek*, *neboured*, *adansonii*, *albida*, *arabica*, § *senegal*, *etbaica*, || *seyal*; ¶ *Copaifera guibourtiana* (large tree) yields a white gum (copal), the foundation of all fine varnishes; and it fetches, in London,

* Or *Malaguetta*.

† Gum used by natives for making size for whitewash.

‡ The leaves and twigs furnish fodder for camels.

§ Gum arabic; the *babool* of India.

|| Best gum arabic, known in commerce as Kordofan, Picked Turkey, white Sennaar, or Senegal gum.

¶ Inferior gum arabic, known in commerce as Suakim Talka, or Talka gum.

7d. to 10d. per lb.; *Copaifera colophospermum* (copal), iron-wood.

Besides these, gum is extracted from many other indigenous trees. Some varieties are allowed to dry on the tree; others are found by digging, having dropped from the tree and sunk into the earth. When brought to Europe the gums are carefully sorted for the market, white and pure gum being the most valuable. "Senegal" fetches about 90s. per cwt.; "Sierra Leone" copal (*C. guibourtiana*), 1s. 6d. per lb. (cleaned); "Accra" copal (fossil resin), £5 per cwt. cleaned, and half that price in its raw state. The gums are used in Europe for the following, among other, purposes, viz.: Drugs, pharmacy, distillation, confectionery, dressing lace, linen, cotton, wool, silk, etc., and for sticking purposes, as well as in the manufacture of matches, ink, blacking, etc.

HEMP (*Cannabis sativa*). Bowstring hemp, or African Flax (*Sansevieria guineensis*) grows wild and yields a good fibre (from the leaves, which are three or four feet in length, about forty pounds of them yielding about one pound of fibre). See FIBRES.

HENNA (*Lawsonia alba*); a shrub about six feet in height; used by the natives (chiefly by Mohammedans) for dyeing the finger nails red. Cultivated.

HIDES and SKINS of cattle, sheep, and goats are exported raw and tanned, the latter chiefly overland from Northern Nigeria to the Mediterranean,* and thence to New York.

INDIGO (*Indigofera tinctoria*, *anil*, *trita*, *hirsuta*, *endecaphylla*, *enneaphylla*, *diphylla*)† is extensively cultivated in many parts of West Africa,‡ and has doubtless been known in the country and used as a dye from time immemorial, yet it can scarcely be considered an article of export. The very small amount that has been brought to Europe has never given reason to believe that the land produces much more than sufficient for the requirements of the natives; neither is the quality of West African indigo high enough to enable it to hold its own against that imported from India, where its cultivation has been brought to the highest state of perfection.§

* *Vide* page 169.

† Also *Lonchocarpus cyanescens* (West African indigo), a woody climber twenty to thirty feet long, yielding a good and permanent blue dye.

‡ Flowers from August to March; plants cut down before the flowering stage.

§ In England a pound of Bengal indigo is worth about 7s. 6d.; a pound of West African about 4s.

INDIA-RUBBER, *see* RUBBER.

IVORY. The trade in ivory is a decreasing one ; the stored ivory has mostly been disposed of, and, owing to the general disturbed state of the interior, the natives are unable to devote their attention to elephant-hunting to any great extent. Though the herds of elephants are not so numerous as they formerly were, considerable numbers are still found in Northern Nigeria, and the export of ivory from the [Niger is by no means insignificant.* It seems very doubtful, however, if the trade in this article will ever increase.

JUTE (*Corchorus olitorius*), the jute of commerce, wild and cultivated. Its cultivation is being encouraged, and experiments at the Old Calabar botanical station have proved most successful.

KERNELS, *see* PALM OIL.

KOLA (*Cola*, or *Sterculia*, *acuminata*, and *macrocarpa*) ; tree twenty to thirty feet in height, both indigenous and cultivated in most parts of West Africa between 5° S. and 10° N. lat.† The nuts, which are somewhat bitter in taste, are highly esteemed by the natives, and have of late years been introduced into England and worked up with cocoa and other materials. To the Mohammedan of West Africa the kola nut supplies the place of coffee, in such request with his Oriental co-religionists ; while for satisfying the cravings of hunger and thirst, and for its immense sustaining powers against fatigue, it is deemed equal to the dried dates of the Bedouins. It is said to render putrid water agreeable, and the roots of the kola tree are used, far and wide, as “chew sticks” for cleaning the teeth and sweetening the breath. The nut itself varies in size from the dimensions of an ordinary chestnut to about two or three inches in diameter, and is enclosed in a shell which has three or four divisions, enabling it to be divided without breaking. “To the African,” says Monteil, “the kola nut is as indispensable as beetul to the Hindu or native of Anam, as opium to the Chinaman, as cigarettes to the Spaniard, as the dog to the blind man.” In colour the flesh ranges from white to red, and the nuts are sorted according to their colour, which is often of very great importance, for kola nuts enter into the daily life of all West African Mohammedans, and constitute almost a language. Offers of marriage, refusals and acceptances, declarations of war, and countless

* *Vide* page 160.

† It thrives on all soils, and is found at all heights from sea-level to 3,000 feet or more.

other transactions are arranged by means of the number and colour of kola nuts strung together (or otherwise), and sent by one party to another. The first act of friendship and hospitality is a present of white kola nuts, and before commencing any discussion of a political or other nature the breaking of the kola nut of friendship is a necessity.

The nuts grow in bunches of three or four, and their export into the countries of the Sudan, even as far east as Khartum, is a very flourishing trade. For long journeys the red nuts are considered the best, and they are packed with the greatest care in large, leather-covered baskets, holding three or four thousand. Each layer of nuts is covered with leaves and sprinkled with water, as it is necessary for them to be kept moist; but no air must reach them, otherwise they divide and become hard, when they are almost valueless. An estimate of their value as they travel further from the place of growth may be formed by knowing that a kola nut is originally worth about five cowries; at Kano it is worth 120 cowries, and at Kuka 300. In the Liverpool market they fetch about 3d. per lb. A full and careful analysis of the kola nut will be found in "Semler: Tropische Agrikultur, 1892, page 200."

LEATHER, *see* HIDES and SKINS.

LOCUST (*Parkia biglobosa*), African locust. A large tree, with edible seeds, used by the natives as a substitute for coffee and chocolate.

LOOFAH (*Luffa ægyptiaca*); used for brushes and sponges. Small quantities exported. The seeds yield an oil.

MANIOC, *see* CASSAVA.

MINERALS. With the exception of iron, few minerals have been as yet found in Nigeria. Tin has been discovered in the Benué regions, and it is imagined that it exists in considerable quantities.

OILS with various properties are extracted from numerous seeds and nuts, such as *Peothaclethra macrophylla*; the *Icaco* or Cocoa plum; Mabo seeds; M'Poga nuts; Niko seeds; seeds of the cucumber, water-melon, colocynth, pumpkin, bamboo palm, etc. *See* BENISEED, CASHEW, GROUND NUT, HEMP, LOOFAH, PALMS, PALM OIL.

OSTRICH FEATHERS. A considerable trade exists in these between Kano and the Mediterranean.

PALMS. The principal palms found in the country are:—Oil palm (*Elæis guineensis*),* twenty to thirty feet in height,

* Wine is made from the sap of the oil palm.

see PALM OIL ; Cocoa-nut (*Cocos nucifera*),* sixty to one hundred feet ; the thick fibrous rind of the fruit yields coir fibre, and a valuable oil (used for cooking, burning, and candle and soap making) is obtained from the fruit ; Date (*Phœnix dactylifera*), in small quantities ; Palmyra (*Borassus flabelliformis* or *æthiopium*) ; Doum, or Gingerbread Tree (*Hyphæne thebaica* or *guineensis*), grows to a height of thirty feet, the rind of the fruit is eaten ; Bamboo-palm (*Raphia vinifera*), leaf-stalk used for poles (a substitute for bamboos), leaves used for thatch, basket-making, and other purposes, seeds yield an oil, see RUBBER ; *Raphia hookeri*,† leaves used for thatch, cloths, hammocks, mats, baskets, etc., and a good wine is obtained from the sap ; *Raphia welwitschii*, leaves woven into cloth ; *Calamus*, stems used for basket-making ; *Phœnix spinosa*, young leaves used for making hats, fruit edible, wine made from the sap ; *Scelerosperma mannii*, stemless palm, leaves used for thatching ; *Pododoccus barteri*, small tree about eight feet high.

PALM OIL, the principal export from Southern Nigeria, is obtained from the fruit of *Elæis guineensis*, which both grows wild and is cultivated in the regions adjacent to the coast. The tree bears best when growing in damp soil, and when no taller than twelve feet, though it attains double this height as it advances in age. The fruit grows in large prickly clusters, and its skin is of a bright red or orange colour, turning to yellow when ripe ; its pulp is somewhat bitter in taste, and reddish-white in colour, and within the fruit is a stone (with kernel), about the size of a filbert. An average tree commences to bear between the seventh and twelfth year, lasts in bearing for about forty years, and yields twenty pounds of nuts‡ in a season, of which there are two in the year.§ The natives have various uses for the oil ; in cooking it takes the place of the ghee of India, and a favourite West African dish of both natives and Europeans is “ palm-oil chop,” which consists of meat or fish swimming in palm-oil ; again, it is used as a pomade for the hair, as a lubricant for the skin, and for burning in the primitive lamps of the houses. For these purposes it is somewhat roughly

* Cultivated ; not indigenous to West Africa.

† Wild, and cultivated for its wine (sometimes called *tumbo*).

‡ The weight of the oil extracted is equal to nearly half the weight of the nuts ; one gallon of palm oil weighs 9 lbs., and it takes about 6,000 bunches to make one ton of oil.

§ Nuts gathered in the rainy season furnish the best oil.

prepared. After the nuts are gathered, they are kept in a hot place for three or four days, when the stones are removed, and the pulp is boiled in an iron pot. This completed, the mass is pounded in a wooden mortar, then mixed with water, and again boiled, until the oil floats out and is skimmed off the surface of the water.

For export a more elaborate process is followed. The bunches of nuts are cut from the trees, and the husks carefully removed. The flesh of the fruit, *i.e.* the pulp, is at this time hard, and, before the stone can be extracted, has to be softened; the nuts are therefore buried in a deep pit for several weeks, which produces decomposition and renders them soft. They are now placed in a wooden mortar, and pounded until the flesh leaves the stone, when a treatment similar to that described above is followed, concluding with the straining of the oil through a fine net bag. This is the general method of preparation, and the value of the oil in the English market depends on the care with which it has been prepared, as well as on the particular locality in which the tree grows. The trade terms for the different qualities imported into England from Nigeria are "hard," "soft," "medium," "regular," and "irregular." "Hard" oil contains a large proportion of stearine, is used principally by candle-makers, and comes from the Lower Niger, Brass, and New Calabar; "soft" oil is used in the manufacture of soap and for lubricating purposes,* and is imported from Bonny, Opobo, and Old Calabar; while "medium" oil is either of the two former qualities which sets after melting.† The terms "regular" and "irregular" refer to the locality from which the oil comes (the former from the Oil Rivers, the latter from other parts of West Africa), and are used to specify the allowance made to the buyer for impurities. Lagos oil is the finest, softest, and most neutral, and is considered quite pure;‡ but all other oils are analysed before sale (in Liverpool), the buyer of the "regular oil" getting an impurity allowance of 2 per cent., and the buyer of "irregular" oil receiving the full allowance for impurities.

With regard to the trade in palm oil, the following figures are interesting, as showing the increase in the amount imported

* A certain amount of glycerine comes from palm oil, and when refined is used in the preparation of medicines, nitro-glycerine, etc.

† Hard oil is as thick as butter, soft oil is liquid.

‡ Much used in South Wales in tin-plate manufacture.

into Great Britain, at different periods, from the whole of West Africa : 1790, 2,599 cwts. ; 1800, 4,467 ; 1810, 25,754 ; 1820, 17,456 ; 1830, 213,467 ; 1840, 315,458 ; 1850, 434,450 ; 1860, 804,326 ; 1870, 868,270 ; 1880, 1,026,380 ; 1896, 1,204,679. This, of course, does not represent the whole of the trade, since very large quantities of the oil go direct to other European countries. The price in the Liverpool market varies immensely ; the best oil is now being sold at about £25 per ton, though a few years ago it was worth almost double that amount.

The utilisation of the kernels* of the fruit is of comparatively recent date, the first regular importers being Messrs. Hutton and Sons, who commenced the import in 1848, since which time the trade has increased steadily. The oil obtained from these kernels is sold in two qualities, viz. white and black (or brown). In the manufacture of both kinds of palm kernel oil it is important to crush the stone carefully so as to extract the kernel whole. The white oil is prepared in the following manner : The kernels are first pounded fine in a wooden mortar ; then ground under a grinding stone, after which the mass is put into cold water and stirred, until the oil rises in white lumps on the surface of the water, when it is skimmed off, boiled, and bleached in the sun. The process followed to produce black (or brown) oil is somewhat different : The kernels are fried in a pan, which extracts a certain amount of oil ; this is strained, and the kernels are then pounded and ground and then placed into boiling water, the oil being skimmed off as it rises to the surface. The pulpy mass remaining is subjected to further treatment. It is removed from the fire, and spread out in a large vessel to cool, then softened by being mixed with water, beaten with the hand, some more water added, when the fatty oil is collected and boiled until it results in a pure oil.† Palm kernels are imported into Liverpool in the raw state, and fetch about £14 per ton.

PEPPER, black ; Guinea cubebs ; Benin pepper.‡ *Piper clusii*, and *P. guineense* (Ashanti pepper), etc. Red pepper, see CAPSICUM.

PIASSAVA, African bass, fibre obtained from the bamboo palm

* The best kernels come from the Oil Rivers and Lagos.

† Meal, obtained from the kernels after crushing, makes an excellent oil-cake for cattle.

‡ See GUINEA-GRAINS.

(*Raphia vinifera**), is exported, and sells in Liverpool for about £25 to £35 per ton.

PITH, *see* SOLAH.

RUBBER; India rubber; Caoutchouc. Second in value as an export only to palm oil, and of comparatively recent development. The rubber is obtained from two principal varieties of trees, viz.: Creepers or rubber vines, and species of *ficus*: both are widely distributed and indigenous. *Landolphia owariensis* (white rubber vine) yields the best rubber; *Landolphis florida*, a large woody climber, is abundant in the forests. Liberian rubber is obtained from *Ficus* (or *Urostigma*) *jogelii*, a tree growing to a height of twenty to thirty feet; a cut is made in the trunk when the tree is about five years old, and the sap is collected in vessels, rolled into balls (the size of a cricket ball), and sold in this form. The vine rubber is collected in a somewhat different manner: in some cases the vine is cut through, in others a slit is made in the vine, from which the juice exudes, but quickly dries; in order, therefore, to maintain the flow the native keeps the slit open, and smears the rubber over his arms and breast, after which he peels it off and rolls it into balls. Mention has been made in previous chapters of the rapid development of this trade and its prospects, but in order to obtain the rubber the inexperienced collectors have almost succeeded in killing the goose that laid the golden egg. Whole forests have been destroyed, and the rubber industry in West Africa is likely to suffer considerably. The High Commissioner of Southern Nigeria has now issued the strictest rules relating to the collection of this valuable natural product. The rubber sells in Liverpool at about 1s. to 2s. 6d. per lb., according to quality, the form in which it is sent to England from West Africa giving rise to a variety of trade terms, such as—Cape Coast and Benin lumps; Sierra Leone niggers and twists; Gambia thimbles; Gold Coast strips and biscuits; Niger heads, etc.

SASSEY-BARK; sass-wood; ordeal bark; a large tree (*Erythrophleum guineense*), with valuable and hard wood. The bark is a powerful poison, a decoction of which is used by the natives for ordeal purposes, as well as for poisoning arrows.†

* The natives of many parts pound the pericarp of this, and make it into a paste, which they throw into the rivers and creeks to stupefy fish.

† Another common arrow poison is the milky juice of the *Euphorbia*:

SENNA (*Cassia obovata*), the senna of commerce.

SHEA-BUTTER, also called Galam, or Bambuk-butter; obtained from the fruit of a large and handsome tree (*Butyrospermum parkii*).* The tree is indigenous and widely distributed in the interior, being found in great numbers in the Hausa country. In appearance it resembles the American Oak, growing to a height of about forty feet, and having a massive trunk. The wood is red like cedar, and is close-grained and hard. The flesh of the fruit is eaten by the natives, and the so-called butter extracted from the kernel takes the place of palm-oil in the inland parts of British Nigeria. The process of making the butter is very similar to that employed in the manufacture of palm kernel oil,† though, for native use, it is made up into cakes and wrapped round with leaves, when it will keep fresh for several months. It is exported from the Niger, and its selling price in Liverpool runs with that of palm-oil, as a substitute for which it is used in Europe. Shea gutta is the name applied to a substance, of the nature of gutta-percha, found in shea-butter, but, so far, no use has been made of it.

SOLAH (*Æschynomene aspera*), pith used for floats, hat making, etc. Another pith, similarly used, is *Herminiera elaphroxylon*.

TAMARIND (*Tamarindus indica*), the well-known tamarind tree. The leaves give a yellow dye.

TIMBER. The forests of Nigeria without doubt contain many varieties of valuable timber trees, though as yet they have been little worked. The Forestry Department of Southern Nigeria is, however, fully alive to opening up the timber trade, and concessions are now being offered and taken up under certain regulations. The great drawback to a rapid development of the trade is the want of transport, and for many years to come only those forests adjacent to the water-ways can be successfully worked. Mahogany‡ is known to grow in great quantities, and ebony has long been exported from this part of West Africa. The export of ebony, according to the Southern Nigeria Report for 1900, has declined considerably during the last five years, viz. from 1,218 tons in 1895-6 to 64 tons in 1899-1900. "The explanation of this unsatisfactory state of affairs is, I under-

* Or *Bassia parkii*, so named after Ferdinand Bassi, Curator of the Bologna Botanical Gardens, who examined the first specimen brought to Europe by Mungo Park. Hausa name, Kedania.

† See page 321:

‡ African mahogany (*Khaya senegalensis*).

stand," says the High Commissioner, "that the usual size of the billets has been altered, and that in order to pay the exporter the wood must be cut larger. The natives, however, are very conservative, and it takes a long time to educate them in such matters." Old Calabar ebony was selling in Liverpool in 1902 at £6 to £7 per ton.

TOBACCO (*Nicotiana tabacum*), cultivated by the natives for home consumption, but not exported. The country does not grow sufficient for its wants.

VEGETABLES. None exported. The following are the principal cultivated by the natives for their own use: Cucumber, gourd,* shalot, sweet potato, yam† (wild and cultivated), onions, peas, and beans of different kinds, egg-plant or brinjal, wild mustard, cassava, and various other native vegetables, whose leaves or roots are eaten.

WAX is collected in various parts of Nigeria and exported on a small scale.

* Cultivated chiefly for use as calabashes (bowls, drinking-vessels, etc.).

† The staple food of West Coast natives. Unripe yams are most injurious; the annual "yam-custom" proclaims officially when they are fit to be eaten.

APPENDIX II.

[N.B.—*The maps referred to are not reproduced, but the frontiers will be found on the map in this book.*]

CONVENTION BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND FRANCE FOR THE DELIMITATION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE POSSESSIONS TO THE WEST OF THE NIGER, AND OF THEIR RE- SPECTIVE POSSESSIONS AND SPHERES OF INFLUENCE TO THE EAST OF THAT RIVER.

Signed at Paris, June 14, 1898.

[Ratifications exchanged at Paris, June 13, 1899.]

THE Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and the Government of the French Republic, having agreed, in a spirit of mutual good-will, to confirm the Protocol with its four Annexes prepared by their respective Delegates for the delimitation of the British Colonies of the Gold Coast, Lagos, and the other British possessions to the west of the Niger, and of the French possessions of the Ivory Coast, Sudan, and Dahomey, as well as for the delimitation of the British and French possessions and the spheres of influence of the two countries to the east of the Niger, the Undersigned, his Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Edmund Monson, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, accredited to the President of the French Republic; and his Excellency M. Gabriel Hanotaux, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic; duly authorised to this effect, confirm the Protocol with its Annexes, drawn up at Paris the 14th day of June, 1898, the text of which is as follows :—

Protocol:

The Undersigned, Martin Gosselin, Minister Plenipotentiary and Secretary of Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy at Paris; William Everett, a Colonel in Her Britannic Majesty's land forces and an Assistant Adjutant-General in the Intelligence Division of the War Office; René Lecomte, Minister Plenipotentiary, Assistant Sub-Director in the Department of Political Affairs in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Louis Gustave Binger, Colonial Governor, unattached, Director of African Affairs at the Ministry of the Colonies; delegated respectively by the Government of Her Britannic Majesty and by the Government of the French Republic in order to draw up, in conformity with the Declarations exchanged at London on the 5th August, 1890, and the 15th January, 1896, a draft of definitive delimitation between the British Colonies of the Gold Coast, Lagos, and the other British possessions to the west of the Niger, and the French possessions of the Ivory Coast, the Sudan, and Dahomey, and between the British and French possessions and the spheres of influence of the two countries to the east of the Niger, have agreed to the following provisions, which they have resolved to submit for the approval of their respective Governments :—

ARTICLE I.

The frontier separating the British Colony of the Gold Coast from the French Colonies of the Ivory Coast and Sudan shall start from the northern terminal point of the frontier laid down in the Anglo-French Agreement of the 12th July, 1893, viz. the intersection of the thalweg of the Black Volta with the 9th degree of north latitude, and shall follow the thalweg of this river northward up to its intersection with the 11th degree of north latitude. From this point it shall follow this parallel of latitude eastward as far as the river shown on Map No. 1, annexed to the present Protocol, as passing immediately to the east of the villages of Zwaga (Soauga) and Zebilla (Sebilla), and it shall then follow the thalweg of the western branch of this river up stream to its intersection with the parallel of latitude passing through the village of Sapeliga. From this point the frontier shall follow the northern limits of the lands belonging to Sapeliga as far as the River Nuhau (Nouhau), and shall then follow the thalweg of this river up

or down stream, as the case may be, to a point situated 2 miles (3,219 metres) eastward of the road which leads from Gambaga to Tenkrûgu (Tingourkou), *viâ* Bawku (Baukou). Thence it shall rejoin by a straight line the 11th degree of north latitude at the intersection of this parallel with the road which is shown on Map No. 1 as leading from Sansanné-Mango to Pama, *viâ* Jebigu (Djebiga).

ARTICLE II.

The frontier between the British Colony of Lagos and the French Colony of Dahomey, which was delimited on the ground by the Anglo-French Boundary Commission of 1895, and which is described in the report signed by the Commissioners of the two nations on the 12th October, 1896, shall henceforward be recognised as the frontier separating the British and French possessions from the sea to the 9th degree of north latitude.

From the point of intersection of the River Ocpara with the 9th degree of north latitude, as determined by the said Commissioners, the frontier separating the British and French possessions shall proceed in a northerly direction, and follow a line passing west of the lands belonging to the following places, viz: Tabira, Okuta (Okouta), Boria, Tere, Gbani, Ashigere (Yassikéra), and Dekala.

From the most westerly point of the lands belonging to Dekala the frontier shall be drawn in a northerly direction so as to coincide as far as possible with the line indicated on Map No. 1 annexed to the present Protocol, and shall strike the right bank of the Niger at a point situated 10 miles (16,093 metres) up-stream from the centre of the town of Gere (Guiris) (the port of Ilo), measured as the crow flies.

ARTICLE III.

From the point specified in Article II., where the frontier separating the British and French possessions strikes the Niger, viz. a point situated on the right bank of that river, 10 miles (16,093 metres) up-stream from the centre of the town of Gere (Guiris; the port of Ilo), the frontier shall follow a straight line drawn therefrom at right angles to the right bank as far as its intersection with the median line of the river. It shall then follow the median line of the river, up-stream, as far as

its intersection with a line drawn perpendicularly to the left bank from the median line of the mouth of the depression or dry water-course, which, on Map No. 2 annexed to the present Protocol, is called the Dallul Mauri, and is shown thereon as being situated at a distance of about 17 miles (27,359 metres), measured as the crow flies, from a point on the left bank opposite the above-mentioned village of Gere (Guiris).

From this point of intersection the frontier shall follow this perpendicular till it meets the left bank of the river.

ARTICLE IV.

To the east of the Niger the frontier separating the British and French possessions shall follow the line indicated on Map No. 2, which is annexed to the present Protocol.

Starting from the point on the left bank of the Niger indicated in the previous Article, viz. the median line of the Dallul Mauri, the frontier shall follow this median line until it meets the circumference of a circle drawn from the centre of the town of Sokoto with a radius of 100 miles (160,932 metres). From this point it shall follow the northern arc of this circle as far as its second intersection with the 14th parallel of north latitude. From this second point of intersection it shall follow this parallel eastward for a distance of 70 miles (112,652 metres); then proceed due south until it reaches the parallel of 13° 20' north latitude, then eastward along this parallel for a distance of 250 miles (402,230 metres); then due north until it regains the 14th parallel of north latitude; then eastwards along this parallel as far as its intersection with the meridian passing 35' east of the centre of the town of Kuka, and thence this meridian southward until its intersection with the southern shore of Lake Chad.

The Government of the French Republic recognises, as falling within the British sphere, the territory to the east of the Niger comprised within the above-mentioned line, the Anglo-German frontier, and the sea.

The Government of Her Britannic Majesty recognises, as falling within the French sphere, the northern, eastern, and southern shores of Lake Chad, which are comprised between the point of intersection of the 14th degree of north latitude, with the western shore of the lake and the point of incidence on the shore of the lake of the frontier determined by the Franco-German Convention of the 15th March, 1894.

ARTICLE V.

The frontiers set forth in the present Protocol are indicated on the annexed Maps, which are marked 1 and 2 respectively.

The two Governments undertake to appoint within a year as regards the frontiers west of the Niger, and within two years as regards the frontier east of that river, to count in each case from the date of the exchange of ratifications of the Convention which is to be concluded between them for the purpose of confirming the present Protocol, Commissioners who will be charged with delimiting on the spot the lines of demarcation between the British and French possessions, in conformity and in accordance with the spirit of the stipulations of the present Protocol.

With respect to the delimitation of the portion of the Niger in the neighbourhood of Ilo and the Dallul Mauri, referred to in Article III., the Boundary Commissioners shall, in determining on the spot the river frontier, distribute equitably between the two Contracting Powers such islands as may be found to interfere with the delimitation of the river as defined in Article III.

It is understood between the two Contracting Powers that no subsequent alteration in the position of the median line of the river shall affect the ownership of the islands assigned to each of the two Powers by the *procès-verbal* of the Commissioners, after being duly approved by the two Governments.

ARTICLE VI.

The two Contracting Powers engage reciprocally to treat with consideration ("bienveillance") the native Chiefs who, having had treaties with one of them, shall, in virtue of the present Protocol, come under the sovereignty of the other.

ARTICLE VII.

Each of the two Contracting Powers undertakes not to exercise any political action in the spheres of the other, as defined by Articles I., II., III., and IV. of the present Protocol.

It is understood by this that each Power will not, in the spheres of the other, make territorial acquisitions, conclude Treaties, accept sovereign rights or Protectorates, nor hinder nor dispute the influence of the other.

ARTICLE VIII.

Her Britannic Majesty's Government will grant on lease to the Government of the French Republic, for the objects, and on the conditions specified in the form of lease annexed to the present Protocol, two pieces of ground to be selected by the Government of the French Republic in conjunction with Her Britannic Majesty's Government, one of which will be situated in a suitable spot on the right bank of the Niger between Leaba and the junction of the River Moussa (Mochi) with the former river, and the other on one of the mouths of the Niger. Each of these pieces of land shall have a river frontage not exceeding 400 metres in length, and shall form a block, the area of which shall not be less than 10 nor more than 50 hectares in extent. The exact boundaries of these pieces of land shall be shown on a plan annexed to each of the leases.

The conditions upon which the transit of merchandise shall be carried on on the Niger, its affluents, its branches and outlets, as well as between the piece of ground between Leaba and the junction of the River Moussa (Mochi) mentioned above, and the point upon the French frontier to be specified by the Government of the French Republic, will form the subject of Regulations, the details of which shall be discussed by the two Governments immediately after the signature of the present Protocol.

Her Britannic Majesty's Government undertake to give four months' notice to the French Government of any modification in the Regulations in question, in order to afford to the said French Government the opportunity of laying before the British Government any representations which it may wish to make.

ARTICLE IX.

Within the limits defined on Map No. 2, which is annexed to the present Protocol, British subjects and British protected persons and French citizens and French protected persons, as far as regards their persons and goods, and the merchandise the produce or the manufacture of Great Britain and France, their respective Colonies, possessions, and Protectorates, shall enjoy for thirty years from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of the Convention mentioned in Article V: the

same treatment in all matters of river navigation, of commerce, and of tariff and fiscal treatment and taxes of all kinds.

Subject to this condition, each of the two Contracting Powers shall be free to fix, in its own territory, and as may appear to it most convenient, the tariff and fiscal treatment and taxes of all kinds.

In case neither of the two Contracting Powers shall have notified twelve months before the expiration of the above-mentioned term of thirty years its intention to put an end to the effects of the present Article, it shall remain in force until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the Contracting Powers shall have denounced it.

In witness whereof, the undersigned Delegates have drawn up and signed the present Protocol.

Done at Paris, in duplicate, the 14th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1898.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.
WILLIAM EVERETT.
RENÉ LECOMTE.
G. BINGER.

ANNEXES I AND 2.

*Maps Nos. 1 and 2.**

ANNEX 3.

Although the delineation of the lines of demarcation on the two maps annexed to the present Protocol are supposed to be generally accurate, it cannot be considered as an absolutely correct representation of those lines until it has been confirmed by new surveys.

It is therefore agreed that the Commissioners or local Delegates of the two countries, hereafter appointed to delimit the whole or part of the frontiers on the ground, shall be guided by the description of the frontier as set forth in the Protocol:

They shall, at the same time, be permitted to modify the said lines of demarcation for the purpose of delineating them with greater accuracy, and also to rectify the position of the watersheds, roads, or rivers, as well as of towns or villages indicated on the maps above referred to.

* Not reproduced.

Any alterations or corrections proposed by common consent by the said Commissioners or Delegates shall be submitted for the approval of their respective Governments.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.
WILLIAM EVERETT.
RENÉ LECOMTE.
G. BINGER.

ANNEX 4.

Form of Lease.

1. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty grants in lease to the Government of the French Republic the piece of land situated _____ of the Niger River, having a river frontage _____ in length, and forming a block of _____ hectares in extent, the exact boundaries of which are shown on the plan annexed to this lease.

2. The lease shall run for thirty years uninterruptedly, commencing from the _____, but in case neither of the two Contracting Powers shall have notified twelve months before the expiration of the above-mentioned term of thirty years its intention to put an end to the present lease, it shall remain in force until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the Contracting Powers shall have denounced it.

3. The said land shall be subject to the laws for the time being in force in the British Protectorate of the Niger districts.

4. A portion of the land so leased, which shall not exceed 10 hectares in extent, shall be used exclusively for the purposes of the landing, storage, and transhipment of goods, and for such purposes as may be considered subsidiary thereto, and the only permanent residents shall be the persons employed in the charge and for the security of such goods, their families, and servants.

5. The Government of the French Republic binds itself—

(a) To fence in that portion of the said land referred to in Article 4 of this lease (with the exception of the side which faces the River Niger) by a wall, or by a stockade, or by any other sort of continuous fence, which shall not be less in height than 3 metres. There shall be one door only on each of the three sides of the fence.

(b) Not to permit on the said portion of land the receipt

or exit of any goods in contravention of the British Customs Regulations. Any act in violation of this stipulation shall be considered as evasion of customs duties, and shall be punished accordingly.

(c) Not to sell nor allow the sale of any goods in retail in the said portion of land. The sale of quantities less in weight or measure than 1,000 kilog., 1,000 litres, or 1,000 metres is held to be sale in retail. It is understood that this stipulation shall not apply to goods in transit.

(d) The Government of the French Republic, or its sub-lessees or agents, shall have the right to build on the said portion of land, warehouses, houses for offices, and other buildings necessary for the operations of landing, storing, and transshipping goods, and also to construct on that part of the foreshore of the River Niger comprised in the lease, quays, bridges, and docks, and any other works required in connection with the said operations, provided that the designs of all works so to be constructed on the foreshore of the river are furnished to the British authorities for examination, in order to ascertain that these works would not in any way inconvenience the navigation of the river, or be in conflict with the rights of others or with the Customs system.

(e) It is understood that the shipping, landing, and storing of goods on the said portion of land shall be conducted in all respects in accordance with the laws for the time being in force in the British Protectorate of the Niger districts.

6. The Government of the French Republic binds itself to pay annually to Her Majesty's Government, on the 1st January of each year, a rent of 1 fr.

7. The Government of the French Republic shall have the right to sublet the whole or any portion of the land passing under this lease, provided that the sub-lessees shall not use the land for any other purposes than those stipulated in this lease, and that the said Government shall remain responsible to the Government of Her Britannic Majesty for the observance of the stipulations of this lease.

8. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty binds itself to fulfil towards the lessee all duties incumbent upon it as owner of the said land.

9. At the expiration of the term of thirty years specified in Article 2 of this lease, the French Government, or its sub-lessees, may remain in possession and in the enjoyment for a

period of time which, together with the said terms of thirty years, shall not exceed ninety-nine years, of the constructions and installations which shall have been made on the leased land. Nevertheless, the Government of Her Britannic Majesty reserves to itself, on the expiration or determination of the lease, in accordance with the conditions specified in Article 2, the right of purchasing such constructions and installations at a valuation to be determined by experts who will be appointed by the two Governments, on the understanding that notification of their intention be furnished to the French Government ten months, at latest, before the expiration or determination of the lease. In case of disagreement between them, the experts shall choose a referee, whose decision shall be final.

In calculating the value of the above-mentioned constructions and installations, the experts shall be guided by the following considerations :—

(a) In the event of the lease expiring at the end of the first thirty years, the purchase value of the property to be sold shall be the full market value.

(b) In the event of the lease being determined at any time after thirty years, the value of the property to be sold shall be the full market value less a fraction, whose numerator shall be the number of years the lease has run, minus thirty, and whose denominator shall be sixty-nine.

10. The land comprised in the lease shall be measured and marked out without delay.

11. If a difference of opinion should arise between the two Governments as to the interpretation of the lease, or as to any matter arising in connection therewith, it shall be settled by the arbitration of a jurisconsult of third nationality, to be agreed upon by the two Governments.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.
WILLIAM EVERETT.
RENÉ LECOMTE.
G. BINGER.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the ratifications exchanged at Paris within the period of six months, or sooner if possible.

In witness whereof the Undersigned have signed the present Convention and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in duplicate, at Paris, the 14th June, 1898.

(Signed) EDMUND MONSON.
G. HANOTAUX:

PROTOCOL PROLONGING THE PERIOD FOR THE
EXCHANGE OF RATIFICATIONS.

Signed at Paris, December 8, 1898.

THE Undersigned, his Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Edmund Monson, G.C.B., Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, to the President of the French Republic; and his Excellency M. Delcassé, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the French Republic, duly authorised to this effect, have agreed as follows:—

The delay of six months, fixed by the Convention of the 14th June, 1898, for the exchange of the ratifications of the said Convention, is extended by six months and increased to one year.

Done at Paris, in duplicate, this 8th day of December, 1898.

(L.S.) (Signed) EDMUND MONSON:
DELCASSÉ.

DECLARATION.

Signed at London, March 21, 1899.

[*Ratifications exchanged at Paris, June 13, 1899.*]

THE Undersigned, duly authorised by their Governments, have signed the following Declaration:—

The IVth Article of the Convention of the 14th June, 1898, shall be completed by the following provisions, which shall be considered as forming an integral part of it:—

1. Her Britannic Majesty's Government engages not to acquire either territory or political influence to the west of the line of frontier defined in the following paragraph, and the Government of the French Republic engages not to acquire either territory or political influence to the east of the same line:

2. The line of frontier shall start from the point where the boundary between the Congo Free State and French territory meets the water-parting between the watershed of the Nile and that of the Congo and its affluents: It shall follow in principle that water-parting up to its intersection with the 11th parallel of north latitude. From this point it shall be drawn as far as the 15th parallel in such manner as to separate, in principle, the Kingdom of Wadai from what constituted in 1882 the Province of Darfur; but it shall in no case be so drawn as to pass to the west beyond the 21st degree of longitude east of Greenwich ($18^{\circ} 40'$ east of Paris), or to the east beyond the 23rd degree of longitude east of Greenwich ($20^{\circ} 40'$ east of Paris).

3. It is understood, in principle, that to the north of the 15th parallel the French zone shall be limited to the north-east and east by a line which shall start from the point of intersection of the Tropic of Cancer with the 16th degree of longitude east of Greenwich ($13^{\circ} 40'$ east of Paris), shall run thence to the south-east until it meets the 24th degree of longitude east of Greenwich ($21^{\circ} 40'$ east of Paris), and shall then follow the 24th degree until it meets, to the north of the 15th parallel of latitude, the frontier of Darfur as it shall eventually be fixed.

4. The two Governments engage to appoint Commissioners who shall be charged to delimit on the spot a frontier-line in accordance with the indications given in paragraph 2 of this Declaration. The result of their work shall be submitted for the approbation of their respective Governments.

It is agreed that the provisions of Article IX. of the Convention of the 14th June, 1898, shall apply equally to the territories situated to the south of the $14^{\circ} 20'$ parallel of north latitude, and to the north of the 5th parallel of north latitude, between the $14^{\circ} 20'$ meridian of longitude east of Greenwich (12th degree east of Paris) and the course of the Upper Nile.

Done at London, the 21st March, 1899.

(L.S.) (Signed) SALISBURY:

(L.S.) (Signed) PAUL CAMBON.

[NOTE: The above Convention speaks for itself; there are, however, two or three points that call for special remark.

Article VIII. and Annex 4 deal with the matter of the French *enclaves*—two small pieces of land leased for thirty years by

APPENDIX:

Great Britain to France, at the nominal rent of one franc. These *enclaves* have been established on the main river bank, one at the Forcados mouth, the other at Bajibo (Middle Niger), and are used solely for the storage of merchandise in transit to and from the French sphere of influence. They are of very considerable value to France, forming, as they do, depôts for imports and exports, which can thus be collected on shore without paying customs duties to Great Britain. If the conditions of the lease be fulfilled, these depôts should cause no trouble to the British officials, though their presence may, perhaps, be regarded as liable to create difficulties.

By Article IX. the two Powers agree to reciprocity of tariffs, etc., within the limits of the territories mentioned in the Convention for a period of thirty years. This would appear to be in the nature of a concession or set-off on the part of France, in return for the lease of the *enclaves*; for, as is well known, differential tariffs are never imposed by Great Britain.

With regard to the exchange of the Ratifications, the original fixture of six months was, in December, 1898, extended for a further six months, and the exchange took place on the 13th June, 1899, when additions were made to Article IV. and Article IX. Both of these supplements (although not immediately affecting British Nigeria) are of considerable importance. By the one is fixed the frontier between the French sphere east of Lake Chad and the British Sudan, so that Tibesti, Borku, and Wadai fall to France, and Darfur to Great Britain; while the other extends the area of equality of treatment as to tariffs, so as to include the country due east of British Nigeria as far as the Upper Nile.]

APPENDIX III.

AWARD GIVEN BY BARON LAMBERMONT IN THE QUESTION OF THE "SERGENT MALAMINE."

HAVING agreed, with the King's consent, to undertake the functions of Arbitrator, which His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the French Republic have done me the honour to confer upon me, in a question caused by the passage of a French Mission through the basins of the Niger and of the Benué in 1893, and by the seizure by the British authorities of a French vessel, the *Sergent Malamine*, and her cargo ;

Being animated by a desire to respond by a careful and impartial award to the confidence reposed in me ;

And having, to this end, duly examined the documents produced by the two High Parties ;

I have decided and do decide as follows :

Seeing that the duty of the Arbitrator is thus defined in the Arbitration Convention signed by the two Governments on the 3rd April, 1901 : " The Arbitrator shall give a final decision in regard to the amount in the indemnity for the loss of the *Sergent Malamine*, which sum shall not be less than £5,000, nor more than £8,000 " ;

Seeing that, according to the Case and Counter-Case furnished by the French Government, the indemnity should be calculated on the value of the vessel, on a part of a postal subsidy lost by the charterers and on the value of the cargo, while, according to the Case of the British Government, the indemnity should correspond only to the value of the vessel ;

Seeing that the question has under various aspects, and without ever reaching a solution, formed part of the negotiations, which for a number of years have proceeded between the two Governments with a view to a general settlement of their relations in Africa ;

Seeing that the documents produced by the Parties in

support of their respective Cases, refer to different phases of the litigation :

I consider it necessary to clear the ground on which my conclusions are to be founded, and with this object, to examine the conventional law involved, and to inquire into the questions of liability, without reopening controversies which have remained undecided.

The Berlin Conference proclaimed and provided for the free navigation of the Niger and of its tributaries : equality of all flags ; no differential treatment ; no toll based on the mere fact of navigation, those taxes alone being collected which are in the nature of payment for services rendered to navigation ; free transit for ships and the merchandise which they carry ; executive Regulations in accordance with the spirit of these stipulations—these are the chief guarantees assured to the navigation of the Niger and its tributaries.

But the General Act of Berlin does not confuse trade with transit. It does not extend to the territories watered by the Niger and its tributaries, Article IV., which exempted from import duties merchandise imported into the conventional basin of the Congo. Merchandise imported into the territories of the Niger and its tributaries, or exported from those territories, may, unless it merely passes in transit over the river or its tributaries, be subjected to import and export duties: Certain ports are open exclusively for these purposes.

Every customs system is protected by penalties for infractions of its laws.

The traffic in arms is prohibited in principle. Exceptions are allowed in certain specified cases only.

Such being a summary of the system, it remains to be seen whether the British authorities had power to put it into force, and whether the other party violated it.

By the General Act of Berlin, two conditions are necessary for taking possession of a new territory or of a Protectorate . notification to the other Signatory Powers of the General Act, and the existence of authority sufficient to protect existing rights.

These Rules, as they apply only to territories situated on the coast of the African Continent, did not affect British authority on the course of the Benué. Nevertheless, the British Protectorate on the banks of the Benué as far as Ibi was notified on the 5th June, 1885.

Another Notification, of the 18th October, 1887, was based on, and referred to, the Charter granted to the Royal Niger Company.

The same Notification declared the territories of the Niger or its tributaries, which were or might be under the government of the Niger Company, to be under British protection.

This Company exercised in 1893, over the course of the Benué as far as Yola, authority supported by means adequate to insure the accomplishment of its task. This was indeed shown by what befel the French expedition.

This system was defective neither in notification nor in means of execution.

Other stipulations related to the position of British authority in these same regions.

A list of the native chiefs, with whom the Company had concluded Treaties, was annexed to the Charter of the Niger Company, notified on the 18th October, 1887. The Sultan of Muri was included in this enumeration.

On the 5th August, 1890, the French and British Governments entered into an Agreement by which the spheres of action of the two countries were separated by a line starting from Say, on the Niger, and passing along the northern frontier of Sokoto to the town of Barruwa on Lake Chad. No exception was made as to the Benué, on which are situated Muri and a considerable part of Adamawa. This was the position of things in 1893, at the time of the French expedition.

It should be observed that the Treaties concluded by Lieutenant Mizon with the Emir of Adamawa and the Sultan of Muri were signed at a time when the system described above already existed on the Benué.

The French expedition acted contrary to this system by carrying on commercial operations at various points which were not open to trade, or by refusing to pay the import or export duties imposed by the Regulations in force.

The Brussels Conference paid especial attention to the traffic in arms. "The experience of all nations who have intercourse with Africa," says Article VIII. of the Act of the 2nd July, 1890, "has shown the pernicious and preponderating part played by fire-arms in Slave Trade operations, as well as in intestine wars between native tribes; and this same experience has clearly proved that the preservation of the African populations, whose existence it is the express wish of the Powers to

safeguard, is a radical impossibility if restrictive measures against the trade in fire-arms and ammunitions are not established."

Consequently, the importation of fire-arms, and especially of rifled and improved weapons, was forbidden in a zone which embraces the basin of the Benué. An exception was made in individual cases in favour of persons who offer a sufficient guarantee that the arms and ammunition delivered to them will not be given, assigned, or sold to third persons, and for travellers provided with a declaration of their Government, stating that the weapon and ammunitions are destined exclusively for their personal defence.

The declarations made by the French Ambassador in London, and by the head of the French expedition himself, were conceived in this spirit.

But the arms transported by the French Mission were handed gratis to the Sultans of Muri and of Adamawa.

This proceeding is incompatible with the spirit of the Brussels Act. The matter would be doubly serious if the gift served as a means of negotiation with the native Chiefs, who eagerly desire improved weapons.

From this statement it follows, on the one hand, that by engaging in commerce in the basin of the Benué, without regard to the customs system there established, the French expedition exposed itself to the penal consequences of its infractions of that system, and, on the other hand, that by delivering improved weapons to two native Chiefs, it acted contrary to the provisions of the General Act of Brussels.

But, in inquiring into the liability incurred, it is only fair to take into consideration the times and surroundings in which occurred the events above recorded. When the centre of Africa ceased to be a blank space on the map, all eyes were turned with increased interest to the political and economic chess board which was being opened out to the world. Explorations and expeditions under various flags increased in number and crossed each other. Territory was taken possession of under various forms: sovereignty, Protectorates, spheres of influence: In 1893 matters were still in a state which often rendered it difficult to have a distinct and uncontested conception of the debit and credit account of each Power in Africa. Such considerations may belong to the sphere of politics, but they cannot, on that account, be neglected in judging of action taken under their influence.

It must, moreover, be borne in mind that the object of the Convention is to close the incident submitted to arbitration in a manner corresponding to the sense of equity and of conciliation with which the two Governments are imbued.

Finally, it must be remembered that the principle of an indemnity is admitted by the Convention of the 3rd April, 1901, and that difference of opinion bears only on the ground which it is to cover.

It is necessary to keep all these points in view in dealing with the various elements involved in the final assessment of the indemnity.

1.—*The Vessel.*

Whereas the British Government offered to restore the vessel, and when it foundered offered to repay its value ;

Whereas as regards the vessel it is thus merely necessary to estimate its price ;

Whereas the French Case reckons the expense of building the *Sergent Malamine* at 151,833 fr. 75 c., and, calculating the rate of depreciation at 5 per cent., estimates the value of the vessel at the time of its seizure at 125,267 fr. 80 c. ;

Whereas, although the price of construction can be taken as correct, sufficient allowance has not been made, in fixing the rate of depreciation, for the fact that the ship was sailing on the West Coast of Africa on the waters of the Niger and its tributaries, and had not the facilities for repairs afforded by European harbours :

In these circumstances I decide that the rate of depreciation must be raised to 7 per cent.

2.—*Objections raised in the British Case respecting Postal Subsidies and Cargo.*

Whereas the British Case admits as basis of the indemnity merely the value of the ship itself, excluding all other elements; such as the loss of postal subsidies or of cargo ;

Whereas the British judicial authorities ordered the confiscation both of the *Sergent Malamine* and also of all merchandise belonging to the French expedition ;

Whereas, subsequently to this order, the Convention of the 3rd April, 1901, stipulated for the payment of an indemnity for the loss of the *Sergent Malamine* ;

Whereas this Diplomatic Act neither decides what is meant by the loss of the *Sergent Malamine*, nor who is to benefit by the indemnity ;

Whereas if the text of the Convention is ambiguous, the two Contracting Parties are equally responsible for this lack of clearness :

I consider that there is no need to reject *à priori* claims relating to the subsidies and to the cargo ;

And I decide that the question of interpretation raised by the British Case must, in the first place, be settled in accordance with the above-mentioned considerations, and in connection with the liability involved.

3.—*The Postal Subsidies.*

Whereas the “Compagnie des Chargeurs Réunis,” owners of the *Sergent Malamine*, received from the French Government a yearly postal subsidy of 38,475 fr. for twelve trips a year ;

Whereas the *Sergent Malamine* was, with the consent of the French Government, placed at the disposal of the “Compagnie de l’Afrique Française” for a period of one year, to expire on the 15th October, 1893 ;

Whereas at this date the *Sergent Malamine* not having returned, the “Compagnie des Chargeurs Réunis” made a new Contract with the French Government, by which the number of trips a year was reduced from twelve to six, and the subsidy reduced by one-half from the 1st February, 1894 ;

Whereas the plaintiff demands two indemnities :

(a) An indemnity for the period between the day on which the *Sergent Malamine* should have returned, and the date on which the new Contract with the Administration of the French Posts came into force ;

(b) An indemnity for the period between the coming into force of the new Contract and the signature of the Convention of Arbitration—that is, from the 1st February, 1894, to the 17th July, 1901.

(a)—*Period from the 15th October, 1893, to the 1st February, 1894.*

Whereas the charterers had no part in the actions and the liabilities connected with the seizure and detention of the *Sergent Malamine* :

I declare it just to indemnify them for the injury which they suffered owing to the absence of the *Sergent Malamine* at that

time, a loss calculated in the French Case at 11,221 fr. 88 c. Nevertheless, I am of opinion that the amount claimed under this head should be somewhat reduced, as postal subsidies are not a profit pure and simple to those who contract for them, but are to an amount which may reach about half the total, so calculated as to cover the risks and charges of public services which Governments desire to stimulate or to maintain.

(b)—*Period from 1st February, 1894, to 17th July, 1901.*

Whereas in virtue of their new Contract with the Administration of the French Posts the "Compagnie des Chargeurs Réunis" was only bound to perform half the number of trips at first stipulated and whereas they retained the postal subsidy corresponding to that half;

Whereas as regards the other half, one and the same Contract cannot have had the effect both of reducing expenses and of maintaining intact the right to payment:

I decide that there is no foundation for the claim to an indemnity for this second period.

4.—*The Cargo.*

Whereas, under their Contract with the "Compagnie des Chargeurs Réunis," the "Société Française de l'Afrique Centrale" had the sole management of the running and of the trade of the *Sergent Malamine*;

Whereas the conditions under which they carried on trade in the basin of the Benué made them liable;

Whereas they are, therefore, liable for wrongful acts done;

But, whereas the considerations mentioned above, tending to extenuate their responsibility in a certain measure, can be applied to their case:

I consider that there are sufficient grounds for a decision which would alleviate in part the loss which they suffered:

For this reason, and having regard to all the considerations successively brought forward:

I fix the total indemnity to be paid by the British Government at the sum of £6,500.

(Done at Brussels, in triplicate, the 15th July, 1902.)

(Signed) BARON LAMBERMONT.

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